

Common Ground

The War and the Foreign-
Language Press — YAROSLAV J. CHYZ

The Negro Press — ROI OTTLEY

KATIE STIEGLITZ Sholem Asch

THE MAKING OF AN AMERICAN FAMILY

Claude M. Fuess

THE FORGOTTEN MEXICAN Carey McWilliams

CROSSROADS Woody Guthrie

NEW ENGLAND ACCEPTS Barbara Parmelee

THE JEWS: FACT AND FICTION Edward E. Grusd

and others

50c.

SPRING 1943

This War Will Be Won by Faith in Democracy.

Help Keep That Faith Strong.

Adopt an Army Camp

A gift subscription of COMMON GROUND to a camp library—or a soldier—is one way of helping spread democracy's war aims.


Soldiers, too, like to read. Army camp libraries want magazines. Help us see that COMMON GROUND reaches the boys in service.

Here are three ways you can help—

1. If you have a relative or friend in the Army, enter a subscription directly for him.
2. If there is an Army camp in your vicinity, subscribe for the camp library or USO Center.
3. If you wish, send an undesignated subscription. We'll pick a camp that is not receiving COMMON GROUND and notify you which one you've "adopted."

Here are COMMON GROUND's "adoption" rates—

One subscription	\$2.00
Additional subscriptions	\$1.50 each

Use the Attached Card for Ordering 

COMMON GROUND. Published quarterly: September, December, March, June, by Common Council for American Unity. \$2.00 a year; 50 cents a copy. Copyright 1943, by Common Council for American Unity, Incorporated. Printed at the Princeton University Press. Editorial and publication office, 222 Fourth Avenue, New York, New York. Manuscripts must be accompanied by stamped, self-addressed envelopes. Entered as second-class matter September 15, 1940, at the post office at New York, New York, under the Act of March 3, 1879.

CONTENTS

TITLE	AUTHOR	PAGE
THE WAR AND THE FOREIGN-LANGUAGE PRESS	Yaroslav J. Chyz	3
THE NEGRO PRESS TODAY	Roi Ottley	11
KATIE STIEGLITZ	Sholem Asch	19
THE MAKING OF AN AMERICAN FAMILY	Claude M. Fuess	24
NEW ENGLAND ACCEPTS	Barbara Parmelee	30
WOODCUTS FOR AMERICANA	Melvin B. Tolson	38
VACATION DAZE	George S. Schuyler	41
THE JEWS: FACT AND FICTION	Edward E. Grusd	45
CROSSROADS	Woody Guthrie	50
FREEDOM FROM FEAR AND WANT	Photographs	57
THE FORGOTTEN MEXICAN	Carey McWilliams	65
DUTCH GAP	William Strovink	79
WHAT HAPPENED AT MANZANAR	A Report	83
DO YOU BELIEVE IN THE FOUR FREEDOMS?	Sally Lowenhaupt	88
CANTEEN	Victor Wittgenstein	91
SEEDS WITHOUT SOIL	Fannie Cook	94
SINCERELY YOURS	Phyllis K. H. Patchett	101
IT CAN BE DONE	William Suchy	104

DEPARTMENTS

Schools and Teachers, 104

The Immigrant and Negro Press, 107

Miscellany, 109

The Bookshelf, conducted by Henry C. Tracy, 115

M. MARGARET ANDERSON
Editor

THEODORE S. RUGGLES
Circulation Manager

FRANK MLAKAR
Assistant Editor
In the armed forces

ALEXANDER ALLAND
Photo Editor

ADVISORY EDITORIAL BOARD

LOUIS ADAMIC
VAN WYCK BROOKS
PEARL BUCK

MARY ELLEN CHASE
LANGSTON HUGHES

ALVIN JOHNSON
THOMAS MANN
LIN YUTANG

COMMON GROUND is published by the COMMON COUNCIL FOR AMERICAN UNITY, 222 Fourth Avenue, New York City, as one part of its program to accomplish the following purposes:

To help create among the American people the unity and mutual understanding resulting from a common citizenship, a common belief in democracy and the ideals of liberty, the placing of the common good before the interests of any group, and the acceptance, in fact as well as in law, of all citizens, whatever their national or racial origins, as equal partners in American society.

To further an appreciation of what each group has contributed to America, to uphold the freedom to be different, and to encourage the growth of an American culture which will be truly representative of all the elements that make up the American people.

To overcome intolerance and discrimination because of foreign birth or descent, race or nationality.

To help the foreign-born and their children solve their special problems of adjustment, know and value their particular cultural heritage, and share fully and constructively in American life.

The work of the Council is supported by memberships and contributions: Subscribing Membership, \$3; Participating, \$5; Co-operating, \$10; Contributing, \$25; Supporting, \$50; Sustaining, \$100 and over. All memberships include subscription to COMMON GROUND. Subscription to COMMON GROUND alone is \$2.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS: Nicholas Kelley, Chairman; John Palmer Gavit, Will Irwin, Vice-Chairmen; Eliot D. Pratt, Treasurer; Louis Adamic, Sigurd J. Arnesen, Edward Fisher Brown, Allen T. Burns, Fred M. Butzel, Mrs. Thomas Capeck, Elizabeth Eastman, Sylvan Gotshal, Earl G. Harrison, James L. Houghteling, Mrs. James A. Kennedy, Robert D. Kohn, Frank J. Lausche, Read Lewis, Mrs. Jacob A. Riis, Josephine Roche, Mrs. DeWitt Stetten, Ida M. Tarbell, and M. F. Wegrzynek.

Read Lewis, *Executive Director*

Marian Schibsy, *Associate Director*



THE WAR AND THE FOREIGN-LANGUAGE PRESS

YAROSLAV J. CHYZ

IT WAS Lisa Sergio, the radio commentator, who a few months ago called the thirty million persons of foreign birth or parentage in the United States so many sticks of dynamite. They can be exploded, she said, so that the tremendous force thus created may immensely profit the United States and the cause of the United Nations. But they can also be exploded in a way to wreck our plans for postwar settlement. There may be a series of uncoordinated, badly-timed, minor explosions, which would only confuse ultimate war aims; or there may be no explosion at all, and a great potential force in rebuilding the world along the lines of democracy and decency will be lost.

If the foreign-born and their descendants can be compared to sticks of dynamite, then the editors of the more than a thousand foreign-language newspapers and publications in the United States are the fuses which may set off the explosions, one way or another. These editors are the political, social, often spiritual and educational advisers and leaders of six to nine million readers. Their press ranges over 38 languages, from Albanian, Armenian, and Bulgarian, to Welsh, Wendish, and Yiddish, not counting hundreds of publications in English directed at the second, third, and later generations of

their groups. Some of these publications have less than 1,000 readers; a substantial part have 5 to 50,000; some have more than 100,000. Papers in languages other than English began to appear on this continent only a few decades later than the earliest English publications. The German press, for instance, played an important role in arousing revolutionary sentiment for American independence in the time of George Washington. Many papers have appeared continuously for 50 to 70 years, some for almost 100, serving successive waves of immigration, and are thus as "native" and American as many English-language publications.

II

The Second World War has had deep repercussions in the foreign-language press. For one thing, it has weakened the publications financially by diminishing their income from advertisement. First the steamship lines and then the foreign exchange branches of the banks lost business because of the war and ceased to advertise. Then automobile, radio, refrigerator, and electric appliance advertisements disappeared or shrank, as the products became scarce or subject to rationing. Even the increased interest of

COMMON GROUND

readers—which in many cases boosted the circulation, especially among groups whose country of origin lies now in the war area—could not make good the loss of income from advertisement.

But, more important, the war cut most of the foreign-language editors off from one of their main sources of material—the “old country” newspapers and magazines. From the Common Council for American Unity (formerly the Foreign Language Information Service) they still receive a flow of “American” material designed to acquaint readers with American ways and customs, American laws, and the workings of democracy. What the overwhelming majority of the foreign-born know about Columbus, Patrick Henry, George Washington, and Lincoln, for instance; about the Fourth of July, Thanksgiving, the American Constitution; about primaries, Democrats, Republicans, and elections; about taxes, Congress, and governmental agencies, they learned from such releases in their immigrant newspapers. And, since the war, they also receive from the government material interpreting various phases of the American war effort. But from the “old country” papers and magazines the editors used to reprint articles, news items, short stories, and whole novels. Now—no more. The gaping pages must be filled with their own writing or with reprints from old magazines, almanacs, or books. Few newspapers can afford payment to special writers or translators to get original material. Only newspapers of those groups the mother country of which has a government in exile or which are considered worthy of a propaganda effort by some agency get original current material in their language. The majority get very little.

But these material and technical hardships are nothing in comparison with difficulties in the ideological field. The

war has cut deeply through the whole maze of political concepts evolved in previous decades and there is hardly any foreign-language editor whose writing has not been affected by this in one way or another.

The press, as might be expected, covers the whole scale of political differences, from the followers of Prince Kropotkin’s teachings about an ideal governmentless society to adherents of monocratic and monarchistic systems. All American political colorings are also represented, with various religious views and beliefs thrown in for good measure. The editors are also, naturally, more or less prejudiced in favor of their own group and their particular party affiliation inside that group. Some are in that fringe of our population where the word “we” means “we Poles” or “we Mexicans” instead of “we Americans.” But the great majority, with the exception of a few convinced partisans of fascism, communism, or some type of monarchism, consider the American political system and the American way of life superior to any other. They would like to see the ideas on which this system and way of life are based, transplanted or adopted in the countries from which their groups originated and in which they now have kinsmen.

In the past, the editors have very naturally devoted a good deal of space to affairs in the countries of origin of their readers. They have taken stands on various issues concerning all nations of the world. If their cumulative knowledge could now in some way be put before the eyes of the American public, it would show that one or another of their newspapers saw and pointed out the various danger spots in the world long before the general American press became aware of them. Out of these foreign-language newspapers an interested agency or research institute could have gained ad-

vance knowledge of and information on the questions of Memel and Danzig, Vilna and Galicia, Dobrudja and Transylvania, the Carpatho-Ukraine and Karelia, on Czech and Slovak differences, on the Austrian "Anschluss," on Yugoslav internal difficulties, on Syrian aspirations, on both sides of the Palestine deadlock, and on almost all the undercurrents which preceded the present world upheaval. As a body, the editors of the American foreign-language press have been, and to a certain degree still are, one of the best informed groups on world affairs in this country. There is hardly any matter that touches political and nationality issues in the world on which some of them could not give valuable and authoritative information or at least direction as to where such information can be obtained. The chances are that even now they are aware of tensions and danger spots which will lead to startling developments during and after this war.

The problems an editor faces in dealing with these situations in his paper are difficult. He is not an anonymous writer to his readers, as are the editorial and news writers on the large English-language dailies. He has to assume a personal responsibility for his editorial opinion far beyond that of his colleagues in the English-language press. He is a leader in his group: he takes part in their social and political activities. If his paper shifts its stand, he gets personal letters asking why he taught differently five years ago. In the present world conflict he is often torn between his convictions and what happens to be the adopted policy of the United Nations at the moment. From his inside knowledge of a particular country or situation he may feel that United Nations policy is questionable or sometimes even dangerous to a lasting peace in the postwar period. Is he to speak? Is he to keep silent?

III

Let me illustrate by a few examples, warning that the instances I choose do not give pictures of any one particular paper. Rather, they are composites of the general dilemmas confronting the editors of various foreign-language groups.

Some Greek American editors, for instance, have defended for years the idea that Greece should be a democratic republic. They have been strongly opposed to the return of the Greek dynasty to the throne and still more to the semi-totalitarian regime established under the King by the military dictator, General Metaxas. Then came the Italian attack upon Greece and the heroic struggle of the "evzones" in Epirus and Albania. The Greek American editor knew it was not Metaxas that inspired this heroic resistance. He saw in the dispatches from Konitza and Argyrokastron the old spirit of Thermopylae and Missolonghi. But the English-language press, in its lack of inside knowledge and love of simplification, made King George and General Metaxas national Greek heroes. The death struggle of Greece for survival became on the pages of American newspapers and in official pronouncements of the United States government identical with monarchy and dictatorship. Open denial would mean undermining the sympathy American people felt for Greek heroism.

And now? The Greek government in exile falls far from the ideals of the Greek republicans. But only through this government may the Greek people expect help from the United States and the United Nations. It speaks in the name of Greece. And the Greek American editor of republican leanings, who would like to see his land free, democratic, and organized on the pattern of the United States, has a big problem on his hands: how to be true to his ideals and how, at the same time, not to weaken

COMMON GROUND

the unity necessary for victory over Hitler.

Four years ago the Finns were heroes in the eyes of the American public. Statements made by President Roosevelt and Secretary Hull at the start of the Russo-Finnish war make interesting reading today. Finnish Americans first were proud of their kinsmen and identified themselves wholeheartedly with them, with the exception of the few Finnish communists who stuck to the Soviet puppet premier Kuusinen, the Quisling of that day. But now things are different. The Finns in Europe are fighting the same foe as in 1939-40—yes; they have taken back what was taken away from them during the Russo-Finnish war. But Russia has in the meantime changed allegiance from Hitler to us. Indirectly Finland is our enemy, although the Finnish people still profess their love for America and the Finnish Americans vouch for it. The whole situation is a puzzle, if not a headache, to the State Department and the American public in general. How much more of a puzzle and much deeper a pain it is to the leaders of the loyal, democratic Finnish Americans and the editors of their newspapers!

Probably no other country has been invaded more often and devastated more thoroughly during the last quarter of a century than Ukraine. Starting with 1917, it was occupied in turn by Czarist Russia, Imperial Germany and Austria, Red Russia, Poland, the Russian White armies of Denikine and Wrangel, Red Russia again, and now by Germany, with two independent Ukrainian regimes between these occupations. During the two decades between the World Wars, Ukraine went through two government-made famines with a loss of 2 and 4 million of its population. Part of it was subject to brutal "pacification" by the "punitive" squads of the Polish army and police, and during the last three years it has endured the "scorched earth" policy

of modern war and the most ruthless exploitation by Hitler. These foreign occupations show clearly to what degree Ukraine was and is a target of scheming, foreign propaganda, and international intrigue. Democratic Ukrainian Americans think that much of the suffering of the Ukrainian people in Europe and much of the scheming and intrigue could be avoided if the Ukraine could have an equal measure of autonomy beside or in some federation with its Hungarian, Polish, Roumanian, Russian, and Slovak neighbors. They think also that many controversial questions concerning future borders in eastern Europe and in the world in general could be solved by the application of the sound American expedient of a free vote of the population in controversial territories. But to advocate such a solution of Ukrainian and other problems now means to antagonize several of the United Nations. And although the fact remains that a subjugated Ukraine may continue to be a danger spot to threaten the peace of the postwar world, the Ukrainian American editor must be very careful not to say it too loudly lest he be accused of disrupting the harmony and unity of the United Nations, and of giving "aid and comfort to the enemy."

The United States Congress did not ratify the Treaty of Versailles. The American public never accepted it as the solution of the world's troubles after World War I. Neither did the Germans in Europe and their kinsmen in America. German Americans and their newspapers resented the fact that the whole guilt for the last war was put on the German people and that French, Russian, English, and Italian imperialists were declared innocent of any contribution to that world conflagration. So did a large portion of American public opinion. And for almost 20 years one could read, in German

THE WAR AND THE FOREIGN-LANGUAGE PRESS

American newspapers of various political colorings, articles condemning the Treaty of Versailles, advocating the union of the German people of Austria with those of Germany proper, and proposing changes which would put the free and democratic German Republic on an equal footing with other great nations. Many American newspapers, professors, societies, Congressmen, Senators, and prominent statesmen fully agreed with that stand. But the spirit of Versailles prevailed, despite American and German American criticism. Then Hitler came to power, overrode the Tardieu-Laval-Mussolini opposition to an Austro-German union, annulled the Treaty of Versailles, and presented the world with unheard of cruelties in his anti-Semitic and totalitarian barbarism. Most of the democratic world, the German American democratic press included, rose against him and his savagery. But in the ensuing anti-Hitler campaign, not only dictatorship, racism, anti-Semitism, and imperialism became the targets of the rightful wrath of American democracy but to a large degree everything that Hitler did. Everybody who at one time or another had opposed Hitler likewise became a hero. Thus the anti-Semitic Dollfuss who ordered the hangings of Austrian workers, and his successor and Mussolini's intimate ally, Schuschnigg, became martyrs. On the other hand, the sympathy for the plans of German democrats, which included a free, united, democratic republic of all German people in Europe, was forgotten. The German American editor found that the continuation of his stand on the unjust Treaty of Versailles, on the Austrian "Anschluss," on a free and equal Germany was looked upon as support of Hitler. But he knows, even today, that his stand was right and that the mistakes of Versailles should not be repeated. But how can he warn his American fellow-

citizens about such repetition? Especially with an Austrian Legion and the Archduke Otto on the American political horizon?

The editors of the Polish and Yugoslav-language press in America have gained the lucky position of being able to bring some controversial questions into the open. The numerical strength of the Polish Americans and Hitler's cruelty against their European brethren put them beyond suspicion of "Hitlerism," while the heroic stand of Draja Mikhailovitch and other Yugoslav partisans has done the same for many of their American kinsmen. Because of this, the question of the postwar Polish-Soviet border is openly discussed and the editors speak their minds freely, without restraint. The same is true in regard to the Serbo-Croat controversy and the matter of General Draja Mikhailovitch himself. In fact both these problems—the Polish and Yugoslav—have helped greatly to bring into the open some of Europe's most burning postwar problems. They have provoked excellent articles in the English-language press, such as Louis Adamic's explanation of the Mikhailovitch puzzle in the Saturday Evening Post, and Blair Bolles' article on "The Stew in the Melting Pot" in the January issue of Harper's. Provincial as Bolles' article is, it is apt to start serious discussion, both in the foreign-language and the English press, and may help bring out and clear up many of the controversial issues of the war.

In fact, it might be a great help to ultimate American unity and the clarification of postwar aims if the English press would pay closer attention to the foreign-language press and get more seriously interested in matters and issues discussed there, which are not so much "stew in the melting pot" as warning grumbings of serious explosions of much concern to America. It would help both

COMMON GROUND

ways: the foreign-language press would see situations in the mirror of the English press in more objective perspective. And the English-language writers would learn that Americans of Polish, Croatian, Serbian, Slovak, Czech, Hungarian, and other descents are interested in European issues not so much because Hodza, Matuszewski, Eckhardt, Subotich, or others "stir them up," but often because they see better the possible dangers in the European situation. They want things after this war settled so their youngsters will not have to go abroad again to correct with blood mistakes and blunders born out of ignorance or lack of proper understanding.

The Lithuanian, the Estonian, and the Latvian American editor is not as lucky as the Polish and Yugoslav. In some Victory parades their people have not been allowed to carry the flags of their native countries because that might offend the Soviet Union. They have been told to "lay low" and keep quiet about their fears that the countries of their origin will be returned to the Russian domination from which they freed themselves after a century-long struggle in 1918-19. They get news about the sufferings of tens of thousands of their kinsmen deported by Soviet Russia to Siberia, and also about the present killings, deportations, and depredations of the Hitlerites. They want Hitler out, but they do not think that occupation by Stalin will be much of a change to their people in Europe. But to say so in their papers, to advocate a policy which would offend our Russian ally, is not easy. It may even be dangerous.

Very few Hungarian Americans and still fewer of their editors are satisfied with what happened to Hungary after World War I. Yet to emphasize this dissatisfaction now means to work against unity; to forget it means to cross out the stand they have been defending for two

decades. There is the burning issue of Palestine and its future, which always was of utmost importance to the Yiddish, Hebrew, and English-Jewish press. Macedonians and Bulgarians have their unsettled problems which have occupied many a column of their newspapers. Syrian independence belongs in the same category and also such questions as the remnants of feudalism in Poland, Hungary, and Roumania, which often have been subjects of comment in the American press of various languages. And there is the Czech and Slovak difficulty, which shows itself in their press; the remnants of the Mexican and South American mistrust toward the "giant of the North," in the Spanish-language press. Many an editor must avoid some of these issues, must tone them down, or satisfy himself with platitudes, although he knows well that the problem is a possible danger spot or breeding place of some future war and a potential threat to American lives.

And there is the Italian tragedy. The American public is hardly aware of the fact that it was the praise of the American press, the complimentary remarks of American tourists, the official stand of the American government that, after months and years of opposition and indecision, finally persuaded some Italian American editors and a great part of the Italian American population to approve Mussolini. "He would not fit in America, but Italy needs such a man," was the phrase. Now Mussolini is "in the doghouse," and the American public, press and government, has forgotten the parades staged for Balbo during the Chicago Exposition and the rebuke to General Smedley Butler for his straight talk about Il Duce. But the Italian American editor and the man on the street who believed them and finally accepted Mussolini for a big man "since all Americans said so" were left holding the bag. And

THE WAR AND THE FOREIGN-LANGUAGE PRESS

it is not an easy job for an Italian American editor who let himself be led astray to extricate himself from this situation. Of course there were sincere supporters of Mussolini from the very beginning, as well as straightforward opponents, but this does not make things easier.

Then there are editors of some dozen or two communist publications in a score of languages. They are now strongly anti-Nazi, pro-American, and for an all-out war effort. The editors extol highly or attack sharply anything extolled or attacked by the Soviet press, and call "Nazi" and "fascist" defenders of Poland's prewar borders and supporters of Draja Mikhailovitch alike.

But despite their present American loyalty, the lot of the communist editors is not an easy one. They cannot come out with a statement that they prefer the American system to any other because that would imply the condemnation of the dictatorship of the proletariat in their spiritual fatherland, and they are often taunted about this by their opponents. Their adversaries quote their articles from the time of the Stalin-Hitler alliance, and see in their present support of the American war effort only temporary expediency. The communists deny it and repay their opponents by interpreting any criticism of Soviet Russia as "support of Hitler" and as disrupting unity.

And, finally, there is a still smaller number of formerly fascist and now sulking newspapers. They are vociferous about the American Constitution and the rights of citizens and the press under it; they "patriotically" warn their readers and the country at large of the dangers of communism, atheism, and the second front; they often give lip service to the war effort and even to the cause of the United Nations in general. But cagey as they are, the editors now and then betray their true colors and then the FBI steps

in. But they, as the communists, are a decided and insignificant, although stubborn, minority.

IV

This discussion may create the impression that the foreign-language press shows signs of disunity. But if we mean by unity only silence, if we mean a token gathering together of conflicting viewpoints into some paper organization that does not really resolve them, we fail utterly to deal with reality. Where honest differences exist, unity cannot be imposed from above; it will grow only through frank and open discussion of the matters at issue, not by ignoring them. The great majority of editors are clearly united on the vigorous prosecution of the war, realizing what an Axis victory would mean to all they stand for. Where they differ is in the realm of postwar settlement. It is necessary, of course, to distinguish between controversies in the press which are fanned by groups and individuals whose aim is to create disunity, and those that reflect already existing honest differences of opinion. Most of the controversies fall into the second category and are worth general American attention.

There are large potentials in the foreign-language groups in the United States and in their press. They have readers in many lands and they have thousands of friends among those who returned to the homeland from America. Before the war, they influenced their kinsmen across the seas, either directly, or through actions inspired by them here and abroad. Hundreds of village reading halls were built in Galicia, for example, upon the instigation and help of the Ukrainian Americans. Many new social and political ideas were sown by Slovak and Lithuanian Americans in their motherlands. The Czech-Slovak-Ruthenian Union was created and

COMMON GROUND

signed in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; the independence of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Lithuania was first proclaimed on October 26, 1918 in Philadelphia, and the foreign-language editors from New York, Trotsky and Bucharin, helped radically to change the destinies of one sixth of the globe.

Now again the ideas born or reared here in America may bridge the ocean and do good or evil. Under favorable conditions the American foreign-language publications could become instruments of propaganda of Americanism in many lands. Immediately after the war, except for those countries where the underground press now flourishes, the language press of America will be the only really free press in existence for many a nationality. Suppressed by Hitlerism, a native free press will take some time to re-establish itself. The opinions of American foreign-language editors will weigh heavily on public opinion in the countries of their origin. The advertisements in that press will mean an important step in gaining markets from many corners of the liberated world. The ideas will carry important messages to people for years cut off from the free world and the free word.

These ideas in many cases will have explosive power. Which way they will explode is not yet clear. The editors in many of the groups now sit tight, try to say as little as possible, keep their opinions to themselves, and watch events. For various reasons they are unable or unwilling to speak or to say all they think. In many cases, as I have pointed out, they know their opinion would conflict with accepted policy or with war hysteria. They prefer to be viewed with suspicion or even attacked than to go against what they and their readers consider wrong. One of the editors said recently to an official trying to impress upon him the advisability of a change of policy over to

one more friendly to one of our present allies: "After the war you will get a job with some private concern and you won't give a hoot about what you are doing today. I will remain with my people, and they will never forgive me if I today defend a course which would mean occupation of their country of origin by our ally of today."

Many of these tensions and much of the silence would be relieved if the United Nations would come out flatly with a declaration that they will adhere to a policy of real democracy, of free election, and free decision of people where they want to belong. If the editors of the American foreign-language press could believe that the fate of the lands from which they and their readers came will not be decided by international intrigue and power politics but by the free will of their liberated peoples; if they could feel a real assurance that the United Nations are not committed to a preservation of empire or the perpetuation of the prewar political and social status quo; if they could present to their readers the blueprint of a world where peoples and nations will live freely next to each other and with each other as Pennsylvanians live with New Yorkers or as Nevadans with Californians, enjoying the same rights and responsibilities; if they could know that such a world is definitely and irrevocably the aim of the United States and the United Nations—then an overwhelming majority of them would become the most ardent apostles of "the gospel of American democracy" throughout the world.

Yaroslav J. Chyz is the manager of the Foreign-Language Press Department of the Common Council for American Unity, and former editor of the Ukrainian tri-weekly, *Narodna Volya*, of Scranton, Pennsylvania.

THE NEGRO PRESS TODAY

ROI OTTLEY

FROM many quarters, attention is focusing today upon the Negro press. Articulating as it does, freely and vigorously, the Negro's insistence that a valid war for the Four Freedoms must include the 13,000,000 Negroes in America, it is in many ways what Pearl Buck would call "a testing point for democracy." The outcries against it as an organ of protest are many, but the understanding of the need it serves is sadly inadequate. To the Negro and his press alike, the efforts of a large section of white America to check his protest rather than examine and act upon its causes seem utterly at variance with the avowed democratic objectives of the present world struggle.

Stimulated by the high-minded slogans of democracy heard currently, the Negro is talking with understandable and considerable vigor about his condition and what is to be done about it. He has gone to war against the American dictator Jim Crow, as well as against the Axis dictators, and, naturally enough, he can impute no good to either enemy. His loudest and most articulate voice in this battle is the Negro press, which makes no bones about being stridently biased in the Negro's cause.

Its truculent headlines, regarded in certain quarters as inflammatory, have caused concern to the government. Archibald MacLeish, while director of the Office of Facts and Figures, predecessor to the Office of War Information, called an informal conference of Negro editors at which he attempted to counsel them on

treatment of news. They told him frankly that unless the Negro was accorded his constitutional rights as a citizen they could not cease militant crusading. This placed him in the embarrassing—and indeed untenable—position of having to ask Negroes to forego their claims for equal treatment in the midst of a war theoretically being fought for democracy. This request, in the view of the Negro journalists, meant abdication of the Negro's rights, and they rejected it. Two months later The Negro Newspaper Publishers Association held its annual conference in Chicago and adopted a war resolution which pledged their papers to campaign for "victory at home and abroad."

Subsequently the Department of Justice looked into this matter of the Negro press. Three or four papers reported visits by FBI agents. The Pittsburgh Courier, manifestly incensed by the implications, labeled the visits as "an obvious effort to cow the Negro press," and with characteristic vigor declared that "instead of trying to frighten Negro editors into silence, the FBI should investigate those forces fostering fascism" within America.

Since that time, in one form or another, more pressure has been brought on the Negro press to end its aggressiveness on racial questions. Lately, a number of people outside government circles—individuals from Westbrook Pegler to Mrs. Roosevelt—have expressed concern about the editorial policy of the Negro press in wartime. But few of the white critics—

COMMON GROUND

with the exception of the President's wife—begin their attack with the fundamental assumption that equality of the races is the goal to be achieved. The Four Freedoms? Oh, yes, but at a comfortable distance. Here is the point where the Negro press parts company with even well-meaning white friends. For, in essence, the press is crusading for a change in American concepts of race, for an end to distinctions based on skin color, here and now.

Such a policy, viewed with considerable alarm by certain sections of the white population, has brought the Negro press into a head-on clash with the traditional American pattern for the Negro. Yet this policy—a line from which it never varies—makes the press one of the most important agencies within the Negro community, if not in America. Its position dovetails also with that of the Negro's "Big Three"—the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the National Urban League, and the March on Washington Movement—those organizations which will not be satisfied by appeasement, which insist on measurable progress toward equality for the Negro now.

Today the press rivals the church in its influence on the masses of Negroes—unencumbered as it is by religious dogma, or, for that matter, by rigid party lines. It also influences those considerable thousands whom the church never reaches. It is, in actuality, the only established agency in Negro life which is without any direct "white" influence whatsoever in the formulation of its policies. This fundamental fact may explain why it speaks out definitively on racial questions.

What should be of acute concern to the white community is that, whatever its virtues or shortcomings, the Negro press is today a faithful reflection of the Negro mass mind, and as such it cannot be dis-

missed lightly. Attempts to muzzle it or suppress it altogether, for the sake of a mythical "unity," are doomed to fail. Such attempts add only one more cause to the deep unrest and groping for self-realization the press now mirrors; they breed only more resentment and militancy.

II

To understand this vastly important Negro agency, we must trace briefly its growth, development, and reason for being, which may throw its present-day character into perspective. To begin with, the Negro press has been a force—though largely unseen until today—for more than a hundred years, and was born as an organ of protest. The first Negro newspaper published in the United States, Freedom's Journal, made its appearance in New York City in 1827, four years before Garrison's Liberator, and at a moment when the Abolitionists were beginning to gather forces for a mighty assault on slavery. The Journal's editors frankly declared that in fighting to destroy the institution of slavery the paper was of necessity an organ of propaganda.

At the close of the Civil War the Negro press numbered about thirty publications. Then the assassination of Lincoln brought new anxieties to the black population. The death of the Emancipator was followed by the emergence of the Ku Klux Klan, the erecting of legal barriers in the South to reduce the black man's status as a citizen, violence to Negro workingmen at the hands of white laboring men, and the beginning of lynching as an instrument of terror. Meantime, liberal white men were consumed with the mighty rush for dollars. They forgot all about the progressive character of the war and left Negroes to shift for themselves in a hostile community. The moral conscience of the nation, once situated

in New England, had gone abroad, remaining there as an expatriate. Negroes stood alone. As they sized up the situation, a Negro press was an urgent need to combat the rapidly mounting anti-Negro sentiment and to unify the black population for counter action. By the '90s, the Negro press had grown to such an extent that a Negro editor, I. Garland Penn, wrote its history in a 300-page volume called *The Afro-American Press*, in which he recounted its service to the Negro community.

With America's entrance into the First World War, "to make the world safe for democracy," a number of publications saw the democratic implications of this phrase in connection with improving the position of the Negro at home and almost immediately became more aggressive. Even the older conservative papers spoke up more daringly. Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer, after investigating the reported "radicalism" among Negro newspapers, solemnly told the nation that the utterances of Negro editors were not "the ignorant vaporings of untrained minds," but the sober declarations of intelligent men who were "defiantly assertive of the Negro's equality."

While Negro newspapers were still not at one in their social philosophy, they all were now in advance of any previous position the Negro press had taken. The war had set them in motion along the road to democracy, and they remained in the groove. Today the press is a powerful force in the Negro's struggle for equality, reaching into every corner and crevice of the Negro community. There are some 230 Negro newspapers in the United States, and the Associated Negro Press, a news-gathering agency which services them. They have a combined circulation well above two million, covering the Negro reading public like a blanket. The leading papers are members of the Audit

Bureau of Circulation. The Pittsburgh Courier, the most important Negro paper in America, leads the field with 225,000 circulation (in 1942).

Besides the Courier, the largest and most influential papers are the Baltimore Afro-American, Norfolk Journal and Guide, Chicago Defender, New York Amsterdam-Star News, New York Age, People's Voice, Kansas City Call, Oklahoma Black Dispatch, Michigan Chronicle, Cleveland Call and Post, Philadelphia Tribune, Houston Informer, Atlanta Daily World, and California Eagle. Together they employ about two thousand workers and own equipment worth more than a million dollars. There are, as well, several hundred religious, fraternal, literary, and labor journals, school and college publications, a few theatrical, picture, and fashion magazines, and such non-profit periodicals as *The Crisis*, official mouthpiece of the NAACP, and *Opportunity*, organ of the National Urban League.

III

Many of them have a tough time of it financially, for there is still little profitable advertising in the Negro newspapers. The chief revenue comes from the sale of the papers themselves, which usually retail for ten cents a copy—they are weeklies. Much of what advertising there is is reminiscent of that in the general papers of the '80s and '90s, before advertising developed into a competitive art, and includes many sucker items such as lode-stones, zodiacal incense, and books on unusual love practices; products that purport to turn black skin white, or straighten kinky hair. The hair deinking process has, indeed, developed into a sizable industry, which, besides catering to Negro women, has found vogue with crinkly-haired white women and gets advertised also in the large white New York dailies.

COMMON GROUND

Some of the largest advertising copy that appears in Negro newspapers comes from such sources.

About this phase of its operations, the Negro press is extremely sensitive. It has indeed made determined efforts to eliminate such copy from its columns. Negro readers themselves have been particularly critical of the press in this regard, but Negro businesses alone—none too large—cannot bring in the sums necessary for operating large newspaper plants, the publishers argue; white firms discriminate against Negro newspapers when earmarking funds for advertising, and they must snatch whatever they can get. Once, when Philip Morris cigarettes experimented with a direct appeal to the Negro market by purchasing space in three Negro newspapers situated in cities with large Negro populations, a neighbor paper unblushingly appealed to the “race loyalty” of its readers, saying it was up to “every Negro who smokes cigarettes to consider this [Philip Morris] appeal.” It is only fair to say that this venturesome advertiser cashed in handsomely on a meager investment—for such appeals do get tangible results. A by-product of the drive of Negro newspapers to get advertising of nationally-sold goods has incidentally been the employment of Negroes as salesmen by many of the large companies which make bids for the patronage of Negro consumers.

It is of course a truism that no newspaper can operate without income, and often, in the Negro press as among white papers, what constitutes “good business” in the eyes of the publisher rules the roost. There was, for instance, the publisher who, during the depression, forbade any stories on Negro unemployment and suffering. With an eye on the cash register, he held that white advertisers would refuse to buy space in a paper catering to a poor community. This is, however, an exceptional case. In one sense, Negro pub-

lishers are perhaps more advanced in their concepts of what is good business than white publishers. The Amsterdam-Star News has for a number of years employed white writers, editors, and advertising solicitors. Today, the Pittsburgh Courier maintains a Fifth Avenue advertising office with an almost exclusively white personnel. The current attitude of the Negro press seems documented in the fact that Harlem’s brand new PM-ish People’s Voice, in bidding for circulation, announced it would accept no advertising that preys on superstition.

Yet this very lack of general advertising often permits the Negro papers to speak out boldly and freely on racial and social questions. As small enterprises, they crusade for government control of big business, particularly those that refuse to employ Negroes. As organs that cater to working people, they strongly support the right of workers to be represented by trade unions. They have launched spirited attacks on those AFL craft unions which refuse to admit Negro skilled workers to their memberships. But, with fine inconsistency, they are, like their white neighbors, generally opposed to the unionization of their own employees. Back in 1935, when the editorial workers of the Amsterdam-Star News, as members of the American Newspaper Guild, sought recognition of the union, the publishers promptly locked them out and charged them with being “misled by Communists,” and Heywood Broun, then Guild president, was castigated by the publishers for interfering in a strictly Negro issue.

IV

Politically this press-from-across-the-tracks may have sharply differing editorial slants, yet together the papers form a solid phalanx fighting for the equality of the Negro. Nowhere is this better illus-

THE NEGRO PRESS TODAY

trated than in Harlem, in many ways a cross section of Negro life. Three Negro newspapers form the press in this area. The New York Age, oldest and most conservative, acknowledges that change in the Negro's status is necessary but holds that it should come through orderly democratic processes and by the grace of the Republican party. In more than fifty years of existence, the Age has shown a keen sense of social responsibility, a policy underscored by its owner's adherence to the philosophy of Booker T. Washington. Calmly edited, the paper has had distinguished editors like James Weldon Johnson and Lester A. Walton, who was appointed Minister to Liberia by President Roosevelt. Yet today it demands unconditional equality for the Negro through accelerated gradualism.

The Amsterdam-Star News, most widely circulated, on the whole encourages the Negro to pursue an opportunistic course. It has leaned heavily on the New Deal, but it supported Thomas E. Dewey, a Republican, for Governor of New York State. When preparing the way for this somersault, it nailed its thinking in place with the remark: "Only by preserving a voice in the councils of each political party can Negroes hope to share in the benefits of a victorious campaign. Whoever wins then must give the Negro vote consideration." Somehow it has managed to support all parties and movements for the betterment of the Negro, and has unceasingly campaigned for his rights and the improvement of Harlem. Beyond this, its chief aim would seem to be the development of a wealthy Negro business class, which its publishers envision as the solution of the Negro's problems. Today, it regards the war as a vehicle for rolling racial equality into American life, and says so in no uncertain terms.

Harlem's People's Voice, edited by the Reverend Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., de-

mands fundamental social change through the agency of a united white and black labor. From the take-off, PV, now about a year old, pledged itself to be a non-partisan, working-class paper, and the spearhead of all movements that worked toward "the full emancipation of the people." It makes frank appeals to Negro nationalism and regards the present world conflict as a "People's War." In the last State elections, it stood aloof from all candidates running for Governor, but endorsed Ben Davis, Jr., Negro Communist candidate for Congressman-at-large from New York. PV holds that "These things are undeniably true—there is a New Negro; He is creating a New White Man. And these Two, Together, are founding a New World."

V

Beyond its editorial harangues, the Negro press is of solid importance to the Negro. While he reads the white press for daily spot news, he goes to the weekly colored papers for an interpretation of these world events as they affect him. The press provides a vast platform for Negro leaders; it serves as the co-ordinator of any mass action the race is impelled to take; and, edited by ordinary men and women who articulate the aspirations (and complaints) of the black rank and file, it is an important instrument of general education. It keeps the Negro public exceedingly well informed of day-to-day happenings of particular interest to the race; and its columnists discuss a wide sweep of events in terms of their meanings to the Negro. In short, the press is a house organ for the Negro community.

It also keeps its finger closely on the pulse of the community. The Pittsburgh Courier, for instance, each week conducts a poll of responsible Negro opinion on matters which affect race relations in the

COMMON GROUND

country. When it asked recently, after the attacks on the press in *The Reader's Digest* and *The Atlantic*: "Do you approve of the crusade which the Negro press is conducting for full integration of the race into the life of America?" it polled a 91.2 per cent Yes. In the breakdown of the figures regionally, the South was only a fraction behind the North—92.4 per cent of the North answering Yes; 90.5 per cent of the South—which would seem to indicate pretty conclusively that the new race militancy is not merely a matter of northern Negro agitation as has sometimes been charged. The vote reflects the new spirit abroad among Negroes, the profound new internal forces at work in the matter of race relations, of which Thomas Sancton wrote in the Winter issue of *COMMON GROUND*. In the evaluation of the press requested by this particular poll, "race publications were praised by the citizens," the *Courier* for January 23 reported, "for the great contribution which they are making to the war effort. The exposé of vicious Axis rumors, the condemnation of Negroes who spread pro-Hitler propaganda, the great amount of coverage given the Negro soldier—all these, said the people, were efforts which proved that the Negro press is fully behind our national effort to win this war."

Negro newspapers are not always serious, not by any means mere crepe-hanging sheets. Society news is a breezy and prominent feature. Considerable space is devoted to lively articles on fashion, art, shopping hints, music, theater, sports, book reviews, and spot-news photography, always with an abundance of names being quoted. The large number of columnists—who conduct what are frequently sound and thoughtful forums—testify to the emphasis placed on personal journalism. Few papers are without two and three gossip columnists as well. But the meager operating capital precludes staffs or cov-

erage or salaries that approximate those of the white dailies. Until the war, the larger publications had underpaid correspondents in the principal news centers of the world. Today they have war correspondents abroad covering the exploits of America's black warriors.

Much of what appears in the Negro press would probably be taboo in the white papers. For example, it seeks to widen the horizon of its readers' thinking on the color problem. The *Courier*, with this end in view, recently added two columnists new to Negro (or white) journalism—a Chinese and an East Indian. Actually, the Negro press has vastly different standards from the white press for handling material involving interracial participants. Crimes against whites by Negroes—to illustrate—are generally viewed against the whole social background. Perhaps the reason for this is the fact that the Negro press has the terrific task of beating down insinuations of the Negro's inferiority, and in doing so sometimes inclines toward racial patriotism which verges on black chauvinism. Contrary to general belief, however, many Negro papers do play up the good side of racial relations, when they occur, in the Army, among students, between private individuals.

As a whole, the press is more flamboyant than cautious and restrained—in the style of the Hearst press and the *Daily News* and *Mirror*. But it must be remembered that the papers are directed at the Negro masses, and no black *New York Times* would carry them. The white *Times* does not carry the white masses; it is the *Daily News* that reaches the millions. The Negro press, like the white press, has learned that to reach and serve the great mass of Negroes, it has to reflect and appeal to the average mind, the common man. So, like the white press, it often oversensationalizes stories of crime and sex; and the reader of the *Springfield Re-*

THE NEGRO PRESS TODAY

publican or the New York Times or Herald Tribune will shrink from some of it just as he does from the Journal-American and the News.

VI

That the press is alert to its responsibilities of leadership is indicated by a meeting held in New York City a few weeks ago by Negro editors and publishers from as far west as Oklahoma to plan a campaign for the continuation of the President's Committee on Fair Employment Practices as an independent government agency. Chairman McNutt's indefinite postponement of the public hearings the FEPC had scheduled on discrimination against Negro workers on railroads was a terrific setback to the slow progress the Negro has been making under the New Deal. This press conference, held at the office of the NAACP, issued a statement which ran in part: "We request the President to direct the Committee to re-schedule the public hearings which Chairman McNutt cancelled. Wiping out the color line in war industries is not only necessary for the full use of the nation's manpower but is also equally important as a pledge to our non-white allies of the good faith of the American government in its proclamation of freedom and democracy as the objectives of the war.

"The attempts of reactionary forces in Congress and certain high-placed government officers to preserve the color line in war industries furnish fuel for Nazi and Japanese propaganda in Africa and Asia that the Four Freedoms do not apply to the colored races. The Negro people and the Negro press are one hundred per cent behind the war effort but are determined that democracy shall function at home as well as be a policy laid down for foreign consumption."

Without doubt, the Negro press is the

most race-conscious agency in Negro life. The war—complicated by racial factors—has given sweeping force and appeal to black nationalism. How far the press should go in developing race militancy is a matter to which its editors are giving serious thought. The Pittsburgh Courier, largest and most influential of the papers, has from the beginning opposed the March on Washington, questioning the wisdom of this potentially violent technique. It has now strongly come out against the civil disobedience campaign proposed by A. Philip Randolph, leader of the March on Washington Movement, as a protest against the scuttling of the FEPC. The Courier, however, is as staunch as Mr. Randolph on the objectives for which they both fight—the complete elimination of all arbitrary barriers imposed on Negro Americans because of their color.

P. L. Prattis, executive editor of the Courier, in a letter to Virginius Dabney, editor of the Richmond Times Dispatch and author of the recent Atlantic article "Nearer and Nearer the Precipice," demonstrates the sense of responsibility that animates much of the press. Mr. Prattis writes: "We recognize the rightness in fact with which you and some other white Southerners, our friends, have described the problem of the races in this country, particularly in the South. But you know and we know that these facts covering certain adamant attitudes derive from prejudices and not just principles. All the right as to principle, you must admit, is on our side. The battle is one of principle and justice against prejudice. All of us want to resolve this issue without bloodshed if possible. Our differences arise out of our opinions as to how far and with what immediacy we can press the issue without incurring violence.

"The Courier truly does not know. It is convinced that we cannot stop at the point where you would have us stop. It is

COMMON GROUND

sure that there are steps beyond those advocated by you, Mr. Graves, and others of our southern friends. . . . We want to win the war as you do. But we know, as you know, that there is grave danger of losing the war and the peace if many of the problems at home, including the race problem, are not resolved. You know that the old world, politically, socially, and economically, is dead. Is it not the responsibility of us Americans who know this to devote what talent we have to get at the roots of the new facts of life even if such action might be termed 'radical'?"

The problem of the Negro in the United States, as Mr. Prattis points out, is no longer a purely domestic question in which one section of the white citizenry accuses the other of a lack of righteousness, both allowing the matter to rest there. As a matter of cold fact, the issue of race today—meaning the rights, dignity, and pursuit of happiness of colored peoples in a democratic world—is integrated with the larger strategy of defeating the Axis.

The condition of the black man in this country has, in fact, become the barometer of democracy to the colored leaders of the world and even suggests to them the kind of "democracy" which would dominate the postwar period should certain fascist-minded elements in this country have their way. And though press, radio, and motion pictures may hide the facts of life from the rank and file of white people as though they were undeveloped

children, the Negro press is possessed of no such hush-hush policy.

The urgent need of extending democracy to the American Negro, and the profoundly positive effect it would have upon the colored peoples elsewhere in the world, is in brief the editorial line of the Negro press today. Balanced so precariously on the brace of double standards, it realizes it would be among the first to tumble into oblivion should tomorrow bring any fundamental change to the Negro's condition. But, for the present, the logic of its very existence compels it to maintain a policy of vigorous "race-angling" of the news which affects Negroes directly.

In its broadest sense, the press is conducting a crusade for democracy, serving, in effect, the fundamental interests of all peoples—white and black—by its insistence upon the extension of democracy and the translation into reality of the announced objectives of the war.

Roi Ottley is the author of two previous articles in our pages—"A White Folks' War?" and "The Good-Neighbor Policy—at Home" in our Spring and Summer issues, 1942. His new book, Inside Black America, will be published by Houghton Mifflin in May as one of its Life in America series. Mr. Ottley is at present publicity director of the National CIO Committee for American and Allied War Relief.

KATIE STIEGLITZ

SHOLEM ASCH

I SAW her for the first time in the Cafe de la Paix in Paris. A friend of mine pointed her out to me. She was Katie Stieglitz. It was a week or two after Hitler had occupied Vienna.

Katie Stieglitz was a couturiere. She created her own styles which were extremely popular among the artistic elements of Middle Europe. She became famous not only through the original lines of her fashions, but through the colors and patterns of her textiles which were after her own designs. She never created a general style. What she tried to do was to bring out, through color and line, the personality of the individual who was "fortunate" enough to be accepted into the clientele of Katie Stieglitz.

Katie Stieglitz carefully selected her clientele, as any worthy maestro does his orchestral players. It was not enough to be wealthy, smart, or of high social rank to be dressed by her. To be accepted by her was a kind of graduation to the artistic set. But Katie would dress only those who had something to offer. She considered her art a contribution toward the development of their creative personalities. In truth, she accentuated these personalities in her gowns through color, line, draping, and even through the pattern of the fabric. Supple little bodies of young dancers she dressed in Greek robes making them look as if they had stepped from the bas-relief of some ancient Greek vase. She did not try to hide women from womanhood. She accentuated the dignity of womanhood. Katie was a fighter;

it took a bitter struggle involving courage and character to persuade these women not to dress like everyone else but to wear the style that set them apart as individuals. She succeeded only by careful selection of her clientele. When she found her subject, she went after her as an artist after a model. It made no difference as to a woman's station in life, or what her sum of worldly goods might be; it was person-



ality in body and figure that she wanted. At the same time, Katie rejected those who could pay lavishly, when otherwise they had nothing more to offer. By closing

COMMON GROUND

her door to the general public and keeping it ajar only for the select, her art became extremely sought after, and the more Katie restricted her clientele, the more women wanted to come to her. She grew famous. You could recognize women who were dressed by her not only in the smart circles of Vienna, but in every metropolis of Europe.

Even as Katie sat at dusk in the overcrowded cafe among so many fashionable women who frequented this popular rendezvous of Paris, I could not fail to recognize the originality of her dress which distinguished her from so many other women. She was not beautiful; neither was she young. She did not try to hide either fact. Her loose, red, silk, Persian cape helped to bring out the warmth of her brownish skin and large dark shining eyes. One or two pieces of jewelry—her golden earrings and a heavy old-fashioned chain—helped to accentuate her feminine personality. Her external appearance, however, which was meant to bring out the dignity of womanhood, did not harmonize at that moment. The nervousness of her face created restlessness around her. In her hand she held a short umbrella; she grasped the creamy bone handle in a manner that suggested it may well have been a last reminder of a wealth and position from which she had suddenly been evicted.

Not for one second did she release it from her grasp. She drank her aperitif nervously, with the umbrella clutched in one bony hand. Once, when she tried to open her purse, she was forced to lay the umbrella in her lap; and she did so with an anxiety, as if the thing were a child, seizing it again at her first free moment.

From the way she held it, I could imagine the suddenness with which she must have had to leave her home. Probably she had been warned of her danger as she walked along the street. The umbrella had

been her companion then, and so it had remained in all the dangers through which she had passed—in fleeing the Gestapo agents, wandering through the woods at night, crossing the mountains through snow storms until eventually she stole across the frontier. To Katie, this was no lifeless object; it had become now her only companion; it spoke to her of home and family, position and wealth, and every other thing hurriedly left behind. I imagine that in reality she spoke to the umbrella all during her escape. In those perilous times it became almost as a child to her, something she must save and cherish.

The second time I saw Katie Stieglitz was in Lisbon, in the antechamber of the high-windowed, whitewashed hall of the Spanish-Moroccan building that was the American consulate. Squeezed in among hundreds of men and women, old and young, who overflowed the consulate seeking visas for passage to the United States, Katie Stieglitz waited patiently. She wore the same loose, Persian silk cape, which had lost the freshness of its fabric though not the smartness of its lines. It had become shabby and worn even as her face. The golden ornaments she still wore—only the chain was lacking—no longer brought out the feminine dignity for which they were intended. Instead, the long earrings jangled restlessly and unnecessarily, giving the impression they had been deposited on her ears because that was the safest place to keep her assets, at least until she could pawn them. The umbrella was still there, its creamy bone handle gripped in twitching fingers which had become scrawnier and more shrunken than ever. Her eyes, larger and darker, had become cavernous in their sockets. The thin lips of her small mouth were nervous in soundless motion. Her chin was smaller and more shrunken and her collarbone

stuck out more sharply. A gray wave in her shiny hair, always until now a distinguishing ornament, had spread and now dominated her heavy coiffure.

I saw her every hour of the day. I met her at every step in Lisbon, as one cannot help but meet persons in Katie's position nearly everywhere in that city. I saw her in the consulate, I found her in the ante-chambers of all kinds of organizations for the relief of refugees, and I saw her standing in line before the counter of the ticket office. I saw her sitting outside the cafe with her ever-present aperitif. Each time I saw her, I was forced to notice the bony fingers that gripped the umbrella.



To me she seemed a typical example of the misery of our times, bereft of her possessions and cast into the street by the cruelty of a regime. I saw how she sank into lower depths from one day to the next; and I was interested to see the result of the struggle with which she so bravely tried to maintain her dignity and save herself and her talents from utter destruction not only at the cruel hands of her perse-

cutors, but also from the indifference of onlookers whom misery had made uninterested in human destiny.

It took Katie many months of running around to try to get passage to America. Each day I could notice how she had lost a portion of her personality, not only in her appearance but in her very spirit, until she became a part of that murky sea of universal misery. I saw in her the symbol of the times in which we live. She became as a part of myself. I could easily transfer myself to her position, just as I could have transferred the whole of human existence to her position, if destiny had not provided me with an American passport.

I couldn't wait in Lisbon long enough to know the result of Katie's struggles. I had to leave, and I had to leave Katie behind me—lost perhaps on the very shore of freedom. I wondered what would become of her.

I met Katie again in the States. She had won the great victory against evil forces and the devilish inventions of red tape and obstacles of every kind. At last she had gained permission to come to this country. At last she had gained passage.

I found her at the office of the National Refugee Service in New York. I hardly recognized her, for she had become a weary old woman, gray-haired and wrinkled; she was dressed in shabby drapes which I recognized as her old Persian cape. Regardless of the fact that it was threadbare, it had many of the same lines it had had when first it made its appearance in Katie's great fashion shows in the salons of Vienna. In spite of all the transformations through which it had passed, time could not take from Katie's robe the originality of its cut.

I recognized Katie by that cape, her black eyes, and even more by the bony handle of her umbrella which she still grasped.

It was no longer an umbrella; it had been torn to ribbons. But from the way she held it, I recognized it even before I did the woman herself.

She rose from her chair in the waiting room at a signal given her by a receptionist, and entered a small cubicle where a smiling dark-haired woman waited behind a desk to interview her. In Katie's own words to me later, she dreaded that interview as much as anything that had happened to her. Her poise—that famous *savoir faire* of hers—was gone, lost in the refugee world of Lisbon. Her eyes filled with tears when the worker at the agency smiled at her warmly and asked her to sit down.

"Tell me about yourself," the woman said.

A faint tint of red came into Katie's cheeks. "I—I only want work," she stammered. "Something I can do with my hands. Anything. Please can you help me get work—housework—tending babies—anything!"

"Of course we'll help you," the worker said reassuringly, "but is this the kind of work you did abroad?"

Katie seemed confused. She looked at the floor. "I must find something! I must!" she murmured without answering the question.

"Don't be afraid. I'm sure we can help you," the worker said again. "But what is your experience? What did you do in your old home?"

"Home . . ." Katie said half under her breath. "Home! That life was so very long ago. No—at home in Vienna that was not my work. I had my own establishment. I was there what one would call in the Old World a *couturiere*."

"That's a good profession. Why don't you continue in it here? Perhaps we can place you."

Katie sat quite still. Then a shadow of a smile touched her dry lips as she shook

her head. "All that must perish with the Old World. I don't think there is work like this here. I created my own styles. I made my women dolls of fashion. They needed to think of nothing except how to dress for the envy of the world. I don't want to do that here, nor do I think I could do it again." The little spark of eagerness died, and her voice rose with increasing shrillness. "No—no, I want to do something useful—simple housework, floor scrubbing, dishwashing. I'll do anything—anything! Please, please give me work!"

She grew hysterical. Her hands trembled as they clutched the umbrella handle, which she had not relinquished for a moment.

"Don't be afraid," the woman said. "We'll help you. This is your new country, you know. Here you can live again and work again and no one will molest you. You need not be hungry or cold. You can build a new life—a useful one—in America. We will help you every step of the way."

Katie's eyes expressed disbelief. "But—but this is no time for luxury women."

"Dressing women like dolls is luxury, yes, but designing dresses for many women is a worthwhile occupation. Helping to make them more attractive is good work. Come. Let me try to place you where you can bring your art to the many."

Katie's eyes brimmed over. She took a long, deep breath. She stood up suddenly and leaned forward, her face alight. She put down her umbrella on the desk. Then she walked out of the office leaving the umbrella behind. The worker did not notice.

As Katie told it to me later, she said, "How it happened I do not know. But this I firmly believe, I did not just forget that poor umbrella. Something in my subconscious must have told me that I no longer had need of it—that one pitiful object

KATIE STIEGLITZ

which linked me with my past. There was something else to cling to now—hope—hope in the shape of a friendly person who wanted to help me.”

Months later, as I was strolling down Fifth Avenue, something struck my eye. It was familiar and yet new. For a moment I could not recall where I had seen it; then suddenly it came to me. Katie.

A woman was approaching, coming down the Avenue in a Katie Stieglitz creation. It was unmistakable. She was a young woman—one of our American beauties. An American beauty, in a dress bright with flowers of field and forest. It was smart in cut. It flattered the lines of her body. It had personality and freshness. A Katie Stieglitz dress. Once more that magic touch was at work setting a dress apart from the sea of common fashion. In a little while I saw another girl in a similar dress; then I saw another and another. And each one, by the miracle of its design, took on the personality of its wearer and gave its wearer grace and dignity.

“So she is working again,” I said to myself, “or does this mean something else?”

I went to the National Refugee Service office to learn what had become of Katie.

“It’s a story Katie herself loves to tell,”

the worker told me. “We placed her as an ordinary dressmaker, which is what she wanted. But her real talents were quickly recognized. A special department was established for her where she is teaching her art to numerous young American girls. It took a long time to persuade her employers—but Katie was determined—that her fashions were not for the select but that even the average girl of shop and office and home might wear her styles with no less dignity than the women of Europe’s exclusive resorts. Katie is no longer dressing dolls.”

Sholem Asch is the well-known author of Three Cities, Salvation, and other classics. He writes: “I have taken Katie Stieglitz as a symbol of the emigré immigration. Certainly, if it were not for the National Refugee Service we would hear of many spiritual casualties among the refugees. But here is an organization, quietly and effectively incorporating newcomers into America’s economic system, in such a manner that they are no burden upon the land to which they have come. Instead, through its work, they represent an actual and potential source of strength for America, the land of their haven.”

Kurt Werth is the illustrator.

THE MAKING OF AN AMERICAN FAMILY

CLAUDE M. FUESS

THIS, as will be seen, is a candidly personal narrative, of interest chiefly because at a moment when so much is being said about "Bunds" and "Fifth Columns" it may throw some light on the attitude of Americans of German descent.

My grandfather, Jacob Fuess, was born in 1829 in Annweiler, a small and ancient village of four thousand people, located in the picturesque, semi-mountainous district of the Rheinpfalz or Bavarian Palatinate, perhaps fifty miles north of Strassburg. When I paid it a visit in 1907, I approached by railroad from Speyer, twenty-five miles to the east across the Rhine Valley. It was then a provincial, hospitable, gossipy place, removed from the main currents of modern thought; and at festivals the peasants still wore unashamed the quaint, traditional costumes of earlier centuries. The French border at Nancy was not far off, and many of the residents, like my own ancestors, traced their line back to Huguenots expelled from France by Louis, the Sun King, in 1685, through the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. In 1907, however, the Fuesses still in Annweiler seemed thoroughly Teutonic in speech and appearance, with no traces of their French origin. But they were Bavarians, not Prussians, and were careful to explain to me the difference. Their private inclinations were clearly not militaristic. Rather they acted like a peace-loving folk, unambitious for themselves and with no desire for further *Lebensraum*. Their government, however, was another matter. For

themselves, they were like the Yankees of rural Vermont, eager chiefly to keep undisturbed "the even tenor of their way."

My grandfather might have dwelt there all his life if he had not been unexpectedly caught up in the whirlwind of a European popular revolt. Like many thoughtful Bavarian youths, he had a dream of a United Germany, with a constitutional government; and when a German Parliament assembled on May 18, 1848, at Frankfort-on-the-Main, he, although then only nineteen, attended as a member. Unfortunately this Parliament, which had hoped to bring together all the German states, had no strong leader. Finally when, in sheer futility, it elected Frederick William IV, King of Prussia, as hereditary Kaiser, that timid and obstinate monarch, under pressure from jealous Austria, perversely declined the leadership of a United Germany. Young Carl Schurz, at the University of Bonn, helped to organize a protest, and King Frederick William soon had on his hands the necessity of suppressing some other minor rebellions. The Rheinpfalz was a hotbed of revolutionary activity, for the King of Bavaria lived in Munich, and many of his subjects, including Jacob Fuess, abjured their sovereign. Schurz, of exactly the same age as my grandfather, after escaping dramatically through a sewer from the fort of Rastatt, made his way to Switzerland with other refugees from his district. After some romantic adventures, which have been recounted elsewhere, he reached New York City in

THE MAKING OF AN AMERICAN FAMILY

September, 1852, settling eventually in Watertown, Wisconsin, in the midst of a German colony.

My grandfather Jacob died in 1891, when I was only 6 years old, and I cannot recall that he told me stories of his hazardous boyhood. Some details I did learn later. His father, John, remained royalist in his views, as did the oldest son, my father's brother, Philip; but Jacob and his younger brother John joined the revolutionists. Once when the old gentleman—my great-grandfather—was captured and condemned to death by a party of insurrectionists, he was saved by the unexpected arrival of the troop in which his two rebel sons, Jacob and John, were soldiers. As the war turned inevitably against the poorly equipped rebels, the Rheinpfalz became less and less salubrious for Jacob, who fled across the border and ultimately to America. What route he took and through what countries he passed are now unknown, for he never wrote his reminiscences. He did, however, disembark at New Orleans, and from there he made his way to New York City. So far as I am aware, he was the first member of my family and the first citizen of Annweiler to come to America. How he earned a living in those early days, I do not know, but he did send for his sweetheart, Johanna Valeria Woerner, who came to join him, and they were married in New York City on September 14, 1854. Two years younger than he, she belonged to a wealthy and distinguished family which had lost its money when she was a girl of twelve.

After his marriage, my grandfather continued to live for some years in New York City, where his two oldest children, Jacob and Louis (my father), were born. Meanwhile other German immigrants were doing very well. Carl Schurz had already entered politics, and on April 19,

1859, after he had been in the United States only seven years, spoke eloquently in Faneuil Hall on "True Americanism." Schurz had thrown in his lot with a colony of Germans in Wisconsin and became influential in the Republican Party because of the group which he represented. But Jacob Fuess had neither the ability nor the inclination to go into political life. Nor did he join the Northern Army, as did so many of his compatriots. When the Civil War broke out, he had children to care for, and he could not be spared. He was by every instinct a country man. His family for generations had been brickmakers and tilers in Annweiler, and he did not care for the bustle of a large city. I never knew how it was that he left Manhattan, but about 1870 he purchased a farm just outside of Waterville, in Oneida County, New York, about twenty miles south of Utica, and there began the growing of hops. Annweiler and its vicinity had long cultivated hops, and my grandfather must have brought with him some of the agricultural skill required. Within a few years Waterville became, with Oregon and Kent, one of the world's great hop centers. Indeed the prosperity of the countryside was shortly to depend largely on the annual income from hops, and when, in one golden year, the price reached a dollar a pound, every farmer thought himself a prospective millionaire. As Jacob Fuess wrote back to Germany about his modest prosperity, other members of the Fuess family arrived, and by the close of the century I had many cousins in that locality.

My grandfather certainly did not become wealthy, but he soon was making an adequate income. His farm at Conger's Corners stood at the top of a moderately high hill, overlooking what was then called the Nine-Mile Swamp, which filled the valley to the east with almost impassable underbrush and marshland.

The view, although attractive, was not as noble as that at Annweiler, where the pine-girt Trifels, sixteen hundred feet high, dominated the landscape. The soil, moreover, was not rich, and hard labor was required from each male child as he became physically strong enough to work. But Jacob Fuess was a free man—a fact to him of immense importance.

Even when other Fuesses arrived with their families, they did not, like their fellow immigrants in Wisconsin and Missouri, keep up their Turnvereins and rural celebrations. The “melting-pot,” in their case, very quickly transmuted them into Americans. They had found what they wanted. Their faces were turned toward the future, not backward toward the past. As soon as possible, my grandfather and grandmother became American citizens. He was known locally as “that Dutchman,” as Schurz was among his Washington friends, but he had no doubt where his allegiance belonged.

My grandfather, as I recall him dimly, was a tall, erect man, of dignified bearing and a rather unusual beard of the type once known as Imperial. His eyes were those of a dreamer or visionary, sunk rather deep in their sockets, and I am told that in practical affairs he was as guileless as a child. Because he never learned English very well, he always retained a foreign accent, and his speech was punctuated with interjections which sounded in English much more profane than they were intended to be in German. Of Carl Schurz, Bliss Perry once said, “He spoke with a slight accent that seemed to add crispness and point to his sentences; he had a faultless precision of phrase, a merciless logic, and an instinctive command of idiomatic Saxon terms.” Jacob Fuess, although he was a student of several languages, never mastered English to that degree. For the Prussian monarchy he had an unwavering dislike,

and he always insisted that he had been a Bavarian. When the German Empire was established, he was proud that his youthful dream had come true. The cause for which he was exiled had then become the cause of the nation, and he was victor after all. He died of pneumonia when he was only sixty-two years old. He had never returned to Germany, and apparently had few regrets at having been exiled.

My grandmother, who survived him twelve years, presents a much clearer picture to my mind. Although I was often told that in her girlhood she was the belle of Annweiler, I recall her as obviously old and wrinkled, with a white lace collar around her neck and a lace cap on her head, looking very much like one of Rembrandt's portraits. To the end she still spoke German with some of her children and other relatives, and she used to teach me to say “Gute Nacht” and “Guten Morgen.” At Christmas she always prepared a gorgeous tree, decorated with all sorts of ornaments brought from the Fatherland. In the kitchen were prepared the well-known *küchen*, filled with caraway seeds and cut into the shapes of animals. Holly and mistletoe were all over the house, and on Christmas Eve we sang carols very lustily. My first recollection of *O Tannenbaum!* is from my grandmother's gentle soprano. As she grew older, her mind turned more and more to the past, and she talked with nostalgic sentimentality of the Trifels and the imposing mansion which had been her home. Actually she never really wished to go back. Her children, when she would weep a little over her girlhood, accepted it as an elderly lady's transient weakness. They were happy where they were. So was she.

Jacob Fuess had naturally some problems connected with the anglicization of his name. Originally spelled Fűsz, it

presented difficulties in both lettering and pronunciation, and finally he resolved to substitute *ue* for the difficult *umlaut*. As for the pronunciation, it was certain that no American could reproduce the correct German sounds. The family seem to have wavered between *Fease* and *Feece*, with a preference for the former. My friends tell me the two are equally bad. I have become accustomed to answering to *Fuss*, *Few-ess*, *Fuse*, *Feis*, and *Foos*. In fact no pronunciation of the name has ever startled me very much. My father, at the time he was enrolled in Columbia Law School, was tempted to alter the spelling but finally, through sheer inertia, continued the accepted form. At the period of World War I, several of my well-meaning associates asked me why I did not simplify the name, but by that date I was identified for good or for ill with it as it stood. Furthermore the legal difficulties involved were considerable, and I had developed a strong sense of family loyalty. After all, the name had been honorably held in Bavaria, and I did not wish to abandon what it represented there as well as here. It is interesting that, although I was for several months in the Army, nobody at any time commented on my conspicuously German name. Actually I was no more a foreigner in spirit than a *Saltonstall* or a *Bradford* or a *Phillips*.

As I have said, neither my grandfather nor my father kept in close touch with Germany. Of my seven *Fuess* uncles and aunts, not one had the faintest trace of an accent. My father, growing up in a household in which German was habitually spoken by his parents, carried small acquaintance with the language into adult life; but he employed English as if his ancestors had been in this country for nine generations. The rapidity with which the children adjusted themselves to the talk of their schoolmates was little

short of astounding. Their French forebears had become Germans; now they themselves were becoming Americans. I cannot recall in my home any pictures of German scenes, any books in the German language, any memorabilia of my grandfather's revolutionary days. Everything was "made in the U.S.A."

None of the children of Jacob *Fuess* had any real interest in agriculture, and they all escaped from it as soon as they could, not forgetting later to tell "tall stories" of their struggles and privations. My father, Louis Philip *Fuess*, is an interesting example of what happened to the second generation. As a small boy he attended the local "district school." Then he persuaded my grandfather to permit him to enroll in the Waterville High School, two miles off, and walked back and forth each weekday, carrying his lunch with him. He did well there in his studies, but when he was graduated, further doors to learning seemed closed. There was no reason why he should not have settled down on some neighboring farm like the other boys whom he knew—no reason but his driving ambition. When he reached the age of twenty-one, he quietly but firmly told my grandfather that he should stay at Conger's Corners no longer. Going to Waterville, the only metropolis he knew, he studied law in the old-fashioned Daniel Websterian way in the office of "Squire Lamb"; and it was through the wise influence of this elder man that my father took the astonishing step of going to New York City to enter a Law School. So it was that at the age of twenty-six this son of a German immigrant hung out his shingle and waited for clients.

Meanwhile he had become engaged to my mother, Helen Augusta Moore, whose genealogical tree is rooted in New England magistrates and clergymen, so that I now belong to the Society of Co-

COMMON GROUND

lonial Wars. Although this is not an autobiography, I must comment on the whim of Fate which brought together a man and a woman from such different origins—one all German, the other all Welsh and English. I still have a faint remembrance that my mother was supposed to have married slightly beneath her in taking a husband with a name and family so clearly alien. Her two sisters occasionally indulged in mild banter at the expense of her new “in-laws.” But she had too much common sense and individuality to be sensitive to the critical comments of her own people. “Lou” Fuess may have been a “Dutchman,” but he was also a promising young attorney, and she loved him. That was enough for her.

My younger brother and I were brought up as American boys in the democratic atmosphere of a New York country village, and it never occurred to me that there was anything strange about my name or antecedents. It is true that my playmates promptly nicknamed me “Dutch,” in spite of my protests and my willingness to use my fists in warding off the inevitable. When I went to Amherst College, it was with the hope that I was rid at last of the obnoxious name; but my closest friend, who accompanied me there, saw to it that it was not forgotten. So it was that I was “Dutch” all through college—indeed still am to my classmates when we assemble at reunions.

It was not until I was in graduate school and had begun to spend my summers in travel that I developed any sentiment about Germany. In 1907, I deviated from the conventional tourists’ route down the Rhine and spent three days with my relatives in Annweiler. Their hospitality and courtesy were unbounded. They walked me at dawn to the summit of the Trifels, regaled me with the delicious *vin du pays*, and shouted German melodies to the tinkling of

the zither. It was clear from their conversation that the United States was to them a land of promise and that I myself, for the first and only time, was being regarded as a man of wealth. They were simple people, with good taste in music and a cheerful attitude toward life; but I was even then all too conscious that the young men had always to be ready for war, like puppets manipulated by some master hand. My male cousins showed me their orders in case of mobilization and talked as if conquest were in the air—and I didn’t like it. They seemed bewildered, but resigned to whatever might happen. I enjoyed the beauty of the Rhine and the homelike charm of the Bavarian countryside. I could still appreciate Bach and Mozart and Beethoven, Schiller and Goethe, Hauptman and Suderman, but my heart was not with the German leaders as I read and saw them. I could feel no strong bond with a country so different from the one in which I had been born and of which I felt a part. Within a few years, many of those youths had been killed in a war for which they could have had no desire.

With the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, I heard and read of “hyphenated Americans,” but there were none in the Fuess family. To them the Germany of Kaiser Wilhelm II, the aggressive, insolent, often ruthless autocrat, frankly bent on overcoming the world, was not the Germany of Luther or of Goethe. While I was in the Army, I met literally hundreds of Americans with German names—many of them in high places—who felt as I did. As I talked with these soldiers, learned their backgrounds, listened to their hopes, I discovered that, when the decision had to be made, they were sure that they were first of all Americans. I rather expected that my father, only one generation removed, might lean toward the Germans against

the British. Not at all! His letters to me indicated that as soon as the German troops entered Belgium, his moral sense was outraged and he would hear nothing more of the "Fatherland." He knew as well as I did that millions of Germans were naturally peace-loving people, but he was equally convinced that they were being wrongly guided. If the Berlin government, even in those days, hoped that the millions of descendants of German immigrants in the United States would be sympathetic with the Kaiser's policies, it was soon disillusioned. The Fuess family, like many others, had learned what freedom really meant.

I stress this point in order to make it clear that national background and family ties had very little to do with this conclusion. The Fuesses were interested in a country which offered opportunity, tolerated individualism, and encouraged honest ambition; they were Americans before they had been on this continent a decade. In the doctrine of a master race or chosen people they saw only nonsense. In this connection I must relate a hitherto unpublished story. In my biography of Carl Schurz, published in 1932, I referred more than once, in passing, to Schurz's marriage with Margarethe Meyer, daughter of a "well-to-do Jewish manufacturer of Hamburg." That Mrs. Schurz had Jewish ancestry was well known in her family, and Schurz himself mentioned it frankly in his letters. In 1935, when Hitler had come into power, a letter arrived for me from Carl Schurz Haus in Berlin, stating categorically that Mrs. Schurz was of pure Aryan stock—"dass Frau Schurz, geb. Meyer, rein arischer Herkunft ist." Evidently I was regarded as impertinent for having told the facts. Even in dealing with the dead it was thought necessary to keep the legend of Aryan supremacy unsullied, no matter what the truth might be.

The outbreak of the present World War found the third and fourth generations of the Fuess family in this country even less likely to be deluded by official German declarations and propaganda. An Austrian paper hanger, clearly no true German, was not the leader the cultured Germany of my grandfather deserved. Hitler's hope that millions of so-called German Americans would rally to his cause and even become his agents in the New World seemed in 1939 to be preposterous and becomes more ridiculous day by day. The names of Willkie, Eisenhower, Nimitz, and countless others offer their own refutation. It is not merely that we as Americans are outraged by the whole Nazi way of living—its intolerance, its ruthlessness, its arrogance, its reliance on force, its disdain of culture, its complete ignoring of the spiritual nature of man—but we are actuated even more by unqualified devotion to what we conceive to be American doctrines: the equality of all people before the law, the widest possible dissemination of rights and opportunities, liberty of speech and worship, the inestimable privilege of choosing openly our own rulers and methods of government. Here in these United States is a nation which, with all its obvious shortcomings, is headed in the right direction, committed to the basic principles of justice, democracy, and individual freedom. The future of humanity depends on whether we win or lose.

Carl Schurz spoke eloquently in 1859 on "True Americanism." The descendants of Jacob Fuess, and others like them, believe in it just as strongly in 1943.

Dr. Claude M. Fuess is headmaster of Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts. He is the author of many books including biographies of Daniel Webster, Carl Schurz, and Calvin Coolidge.

NEW ENGLAND ACCEPTS

BARBARA PARMELEE

THE DAY after Elmer Davis and Secretary Wickard introduced the new food coupon books in radio speeches, the Boston Herald carried a gracious headline: "New England Accepts Food Rationing." Probably few members of old-stock New England families saw anything amusing in this well-bred assent to the inevitable. New England was going to keep her dignity and not kick against the pricks. Let the rest of the country be reassured. Let the Far West, and the Deep South, and mighty Texas swing into line. We in New England had given the word. We accepted.

It was not always so with government decrees in New England. In 1812, when the United States, for the first time as a nation, was forced to take sides in a war that was splitting Europe asunder, New England was rarin' to fight not England, but France. When the rest of the country decided to take up arms once more against the mother country, the six northeastern states, in bitterness at the Embargo Acts which tied up their shipping and in malignant hatred of Jeffersonian democracy, called the Hartford Convention. There the assembled statesmen burned with patriotism—or treason, if you will—and plotted to secede from the union and set up an independent republic. Although the plan miscarried, New England bubbled with rebellion for years. Any government decree was received with the moral indignation that downed the Stamp Tax in Colonial days and tipped duty-bearing tea into Boston harbor.

Today New England, with a tenacious memory for her historic past, still thinks of herself as a swashbuckler with a nervous trigger finger, a dangerous and fiery section of the country whose temperature chart must be watched with anxious care in Washington. If New England accepts, all will be well; if she rejects, let the federal government beware! I know an elderly Harvard man and rabid Republican who burbled with malicious and triumphant glee after one of the President's frequent trips to Harvard commencement. "Mr. Franklin Delano Roosevelt was heartily snubbed by classmates on all sides! Now he has been put in his place, and no doubt about it!" said he. If New England, personified in Harvard, turned thumbs down, who would dare to turn them up?

New England has not forgotten that George Cabot—also in the 1812 period—said that New England contained more wisdom and virtue than there was in all the rest of the United States put together. Although the rest of the United States has expanded considerably since then and New England has remained sealed in her boundaries, there is little doubt among old-stock families that Mr. Cabot's statement still holds good. With all these riches at hand, why should a native New Englander seek for gold anywhere else? A wealthy Beacon Hill spinster was sitting in on a discussion of Pullman experiences. After listening a bit, she announced she had never spent a night in a sleeping car. Someone expressed astonishment. "Why should I travel?" asked

the Beacon Hiller with some asperity. "I've always been here!"

What many old-stock Yankees have forgotten are the parts of New England's past and present she would rather not remember; that much of her best and most energetic blood trekked west to seek its fortune in the depression that followed the Civil War; that the lovely countryside is full of lilacs nodding beside crumbling cellar holes over which once stood snug and prosperous farmhouses; that industrious Finns, Poles, and Italians, planting and tending succulent market gardens, have replaced most of the native farmers: that a rich overlay of Irish, Greeks, Portuguese, Swedes, French Canadians, Bluenoses from Nova Scotia, and P.I.'s. from Prince Edward Island is taking over industry and city government; that the fiery New England of 1812 is gone with the wind; that the learned transcendental New England of Bronson Alcott and Margaret Fuller (who also did some accepting) is only a ghostly memory. The great cotton mills—the Merrimac once turned more spindles than any other river in the world—have moved south to the bases of supply. Most of the shoe factories have gone to the west where the hides grow on the hoof. The clipper ships have vanished. The whalers that used to make fortunes for New Bedford and Nantucket are in Davy Jones' locker. The port of Boston—unless the war awakes it—has closed itself more effectually than it was ever sealed by British blockade in the Revolution. New Hampshire sheep farming has failed for want of adequate dog laws. New England has become—at least she was in the days before gas rationing—the summer playground of the nation, living largely on tourists. Her winter industry is the education of a considerable part of the country's youth. The late John Macy referred to the Massachusetts of the Puritan Cotton Mather and the Uni-

tarian Emerson as a Roman conquest. The Catholic spires sprout thickly and mount high. New England—in other than native eyes—is not what she once was. But who can say the change is not a mixed blessing?

There are enough of the small ways of old-stock tradition left to flavor the "melting pot," especially when it comes to accent. Just as Madame Chiang learned to speak English with a slip-easy southern drawl at Georgia Wesleyan, so will the many-raced newer inhabitants of Boston and Cambridge broaden their a's and clip their other vowels with Harvard. If you are born in New England, or first learn your English here, ten to one you will be forever tagged with the famous New England accent, the so-called Yankee twang.

That accent, though, is not a hard-and-fast mode of speech, identical in all parts



of the six states. In Boston and Harvard you may not only take a bahth, but you may plahnt a garden. Your o's and e's and i's and u's are as sharp-edged as a five-dollar gold piece fresh from the mint and will ring as clean. If you live in the back country, your vowels—except for the a's—will

be warmly diphthongish. You will say "all roight" with a slight spice of Irish, but you will take longer to say it than any nimble-tongued Irishman. If you are a countryman, you may own a saow and a caow. You will keep the saow and the caow in a ba'n that may be filled with saltma'sh hay. And with fine illogic you will drive nails with a spikin' hahmmer and climb an extension lahdder to do it. You may do something with a final y that is almost impossible to render phonetically. Some natives pronounce a terminal y like a in cat and call their daughters Mară and Sallă and wear a derbă hat.

Whether you are a countryman or a Bostonian you will approach an r and then back away from its vulgar actuality before it catches you at it. A Southerner ignores an r; for him it simply does not exist. A Westerner turns an r over and over in the back of his throat and then ties it firmly with the tip of his tongue. But a New Englander just gently begins to bow to one and then hastily looks the other way—except in spots where an r has no decent right to be, run in between a word that ends in a vowel sound and another that begins with one, like vanil-larextract and rawroyster. I have been told that this treatment of r's is simply New England thrift, that a native can't bear to throw away even an r and saves discarded ones for use in likelier places. But I consider this a base libel.

A New England accent, however, is something you have to be born to or learn with your first English word. An honest-to-goodness Yankee accent cannot be acquired—or left alone. You can neither take it nor leave it. I speak from experience which seems to be fairly typical. I came to New England from the Middle West some twenty years ago as a bride. Since my husband was a born-and-bred New Englander, I thought I should avoid offending him, if possible, with flat vowels.

I set out to discipline my speech. Western r's, however, I said, were my birthright, and I meant to keep them. But my r's have little by little rubbed off into something that would be ridiculed in Oshkosh as talkin' Yankee and would be spotted instantly as spurious in Harvard. And, although I no longer refer to my father's sister as an ant, my a's are about haff and hahf, as I once inadvertently said. So I content myself with conforming in broad general ways of speech usage instead of accent. I always go "down" to Maine. I never pronounce Tremont Street in Boston "Treemont." I call an apartment a tenement and an outside cellar door a bulkhead. I have a dropped egg on toast for breakfast. And I never, never refer to a stone wall as a rock fence. With so much, I discover I can get by.

The accent, then, or a flavor of it, will remain until radio stirs us all into a conglomerate mass. Even so, I think, New Englanders of all stocks will talk like New Englanders. And they will probably always eat baked beans. On the train I once met a Texas woman coming to Boston to visit her husband, who was working there temporarily. Along with eleven pieces of hand luggage, she was bringing beans to make her husband's favorite soup because, she said, you couldn't buy navy beans in Boston. I was, as a Beacon Hiller would say, so "flabbergahsted" at this fiat that I could not think to tell the poor girl the right answer. If she had inquired for "pea beans," she could have bought the material for her husband's pet soup by the hogshead or the gross ton. On every New England grocer's counter on Friday night are set forth stacks of two-pound bags of pea—or navy—beans. There may be some cranberry beans and some yellow-eyes in the lot; but ninety per cent of them are good old white pea beans. Housewives buy them, take them home, look them over carefully for lurking pebbles, wash

NEW ENGLAND ACCEPTS

them, and put them to soak in a sort of religious ceremony. On Saturday morning they put them in bean pots with salt pork and molasses and mustard and perhaps a small whole onion and bake them gently all day long. For unless a New Englander can have his baked beans on Saturday night, he dwindles, peaks, and pines.

Other traditional New England cooking will surely survive with the beans and the accent. Indian pudding, that delicately quivering custard of milk, corn meal, molasses, raisins, and ginger, an elusive dessert that requires born skill in the cook or years of hard apprenticeship in order

dients, according to natives, if it can only be "started" with salt pork. And New England boiled dinner, that requires a cauldron big enough for Queen Victoria's family wash—boiled dinner, that divine dish of corned beef, cabbage, yellow turnip, carrots, potatoes, parsnips, simmered together gently and long with a fine disregard for lost vitamins, and beets boiled in a separate pot. It is all arranged in tasteful slices on a huge platter and served with pot liquor straight from the cauldron. After the family has eaten all it can hold at one sitting, the leftovers are put through the meat grinder and mixed into



to achieve perfection. Real New England punkin pie, made of a small sweet sugar pumpkin, one to a pie, an inch and a half deep, dark terra cotta in color and as glossy as a freshly curried chestnut mare. Chowder, that thick, rich soup of had-dock or cod or clams, onions, potatoes, milk, and crumbled water crackers, which can do without any or all of these ingre-

a lurid crimson mess known as red flannel hash. This is eaten, browned in a spider, for the rest of the week or *ad infinitum*. Apple pan dowdy and hard sauce! There's no doubt about it, traditional New England cooking will survive. It may become mixed in the week's menu with borscht, and pumpernickel, and goulash, and pizza: but it is too downright delicious to perish.

COMMON GROUND

There are other small things about old-stock New Englanders that will survive, I hope. They have a curiously oblique way of expression that outlanders find utterly charming. A farmer driving along a country road will overtake a pedestrian. He stops and says by way of invitation, "I dunno but's 'baout's cheap t'ride's t'walk." A house on a private street may have an unmistakable sign in a front window, "Rooms for Tourists." If a tourist rings and asks to see a room, the landlady will say, "I dunno's I've got a room, but there's one at th' head of th' stairs you can look at if you're a mind to."

Perhaps this is caution, perhaps it is reserve, maybe it's shyness. New Englanders do not like to show their feelings. They never give the easy western greeting to strangers. They never say, "Come right in, brother, and set down with the folks!" We lived in our town for four years before the principal citizen and his wife got round to call. And we have continued to live here for thirteen more years without returning the call! Yet the two families meet and serve on committees together with the greatest cordiality and a pleasant sense of neighborliness. We live, by the way, in the "Porter Fearing place," although Porter Fearing went to his reward full fifty years ago. A friend of ours remarked with no feeling of oddity, "Of course, I am not really a Haverhill person. I have lived there only seventeen years." New England takes its time in recognizing barbarians, or in letting them know they are accepted.

New Englanders have hearts, and very warm ones, but they do not know how to wear them on their sleeves, and they would not like to if they did. A young woman of recent immigrant stock attended a New England funeral. The wife and daughters of a dearly loved husband and father composedly and smilingly received the funeral guests and saw to their

comfort. It was rather as if they had invited friends to a farewell party for Father before he left on a lovely journey. The guest sought a safety valve in horror. "Oh, these damned New Englanders!" she burst out. "I loved Mr. Pratt! I'm Irish, and I'm Catholic, and I want to howl!" She thought the family mourning unfeeling; the family would have considered her extravagant grief in bad taste. Somehow, in succeeding generations, the twain will probably meet.

But this reserve, or caution, or shyness does not in general imply any personal concern about public opinion. Most native New Englanders don't give a pewter picayune what the public thinks of them, particularly in the matter of dress. Something will be lost from the gayety of nations if this individualism does not survive. On Boylston Street in Boston you may meet the most smartly gowned women in the world. In other spots in the same city you will find costumes undreamed of in the rest of Christendom. In a club where evening dress is required, you may see, among the most elegant off-the-back gowns, a dehydrated spinster in a lace gorget to the ears. There may be another with accessories of stout walking boots and a withered hat. A third—who thought there might be drafts—will appear in a grubby wadded bathrobe, once baby-blue, over her black lace gown. Each will be highly comfortable in her chosen garb, without the slightest qualm as to the fitness of her personal appearance.

In the Boston Public Library doing learned research for years was an elderly female who never discarded a skirt that wore out. She merely hung a new one over the old. And as time went on, she became, in the words of the vice-director, "Insignificant above the waistline, but portentous below." In a swank market in one of the prep school towns you may chance in summer on a grizzled matron

in rumpled linen shorts, her grocery basket bumping unconcernedly against her bare hams. And nobody gives her so much as an amused glance. In another section of the country a man at large in pink tights would draw a crowd, at least of hooting little boys. I declare that a man so garbed might stroll down Tremont Street in Boston without anyone's batting an eye. In New England a person has a right to be himself, and to dress—provided he observes a few very unimportant decencies—as he chooses.

The old-stock New Englanders came here in the first place to worship God as they pleased. Their great-great-great-grandchildren remain here to do a great many other things as they please. And may they always be able to! If a woman wants to be so nice in her language that she refers to a sprained leg muscle as an injury to her "walking parts," that is all right. If a man wants to be a lineal practitioner of the noble cursing of those two Vermont brothers, Ethan and Ira Allen, that, too, is all right. If an angry little old man wants to get up in town meeting and declare that all the woes of the community are caused by bad boys and that somebody "ought to split a clapboard over their sterns," he is given a hearing along with the good and the great. If another angry old man, impatient at waiting to cross a street in heavy Boston traffic, holds up an irate hand, shouts, "Stop, God damn ye, stop!" and then triumphantly walks through a parted Red Sea of halted cars, that is quite *au fait*.

Even the roads go as they please in New England. They meander in sweet, wayward, and exciting curves, never by any possible chance taking the direction of the points of the compass. Houses sit south by southeast or at any good pie-angle with the street. In the West one goes north and south and east and west.

In New England one goes only right or left. Sometimes one may choose either. I once lived in a New England house from whose front door I could turn either right or left and follow Main Street to the station. It was then that I gave up trying to find directions in New England unless the sun was bright and high.

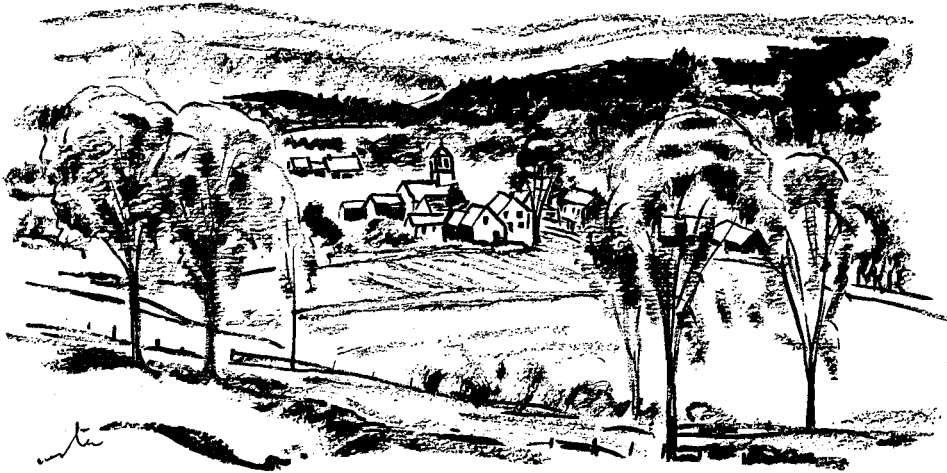
New Englanders get lost in the West, they say, because all the perfectly square street corners look just alike. But their forlorn feeling in the corn belt can't hold a candle to the lost dog sensations of somebody from the plains trying to smell his way through the jungle of Boston's streets. I know an Indiana woman who spent two hours driving in a quarter mile radius to find her husband's newly opened office in downtown Boston. I know an Illinois woman who decided to "go round the block" in order to get more handily at a parking space for the theater and who never got within shouting distance of the theater again that night. I know a Costa Rican who tried to drive from a Boston suburb to a luncheon engagement with the maritime commissioner. He drove for the entire forenoon and finally telephoned indignantly that he didn't know where he was, but that he would find a railroad and arrive very late by public conveyance. But a native New Englander cannot understand why anybody gets lost. It is all perfectly simple. He is the sort of fellow who can be blindfolded, whirled in a revolving chair, and can answer instantly that he has been stopped facing two and a quarter degrees northwest of the post office.

With all these quirks and nicenesses that should be a part of New England's future, there are some misconceptions that should die a natural death. Hawthorne, Edith Wharton, and Mary Wilkins have done a lot to build up a traditional New Englander who is close-mouthed, inhibited, miserly, sot in his views, and gen-

COMMON GROUND

erally a candidate for a psychopathic clinic. Their Yankees were true to life and still are. I could match them tale for tale. Just as a sample I could tell of the New Hampshire bachelor disappointed in love. He wanted to retire unequivocally to his bed and stay there nursing his woe. But

had hotcakes and maple syrup for his breakfast. And as for inhibitions, although we once belonged to a club with a large membership of George Apleys, I know any number of sons of old families who lead free, convivial lives. They will probably say on their deathbeds—along with



he lived alone and did not care to carry things quite to the bitter end of starvation. He would arise and cook a boiled dinner and store it conveniently in his bureau drawer. Then he would get into bed and remain there comfortably, reaching out betimes for a slice of turnip or a slab of cabbage until the drawer was empty. Then he would arise and cook a boiled dinner, and so forever. And this is only one story I could tell.

But all New Englanders are not like this. My first New England farm breakfast dispelled for me the notion that all northeastern natives are stingy to the point of meanness. The hostess served huge slices of ham, hot boiled potatoes, stacks of buttered toast, gallons of coffee, with cream too thick to pour, mountains of wheatcakes, and maple syrup brimming over the lip of a three-quart milk pitcher. When we had sighingly finished, the dog

that Colonial Wentworth who had burnt his candle at either end, blown in his patrimony, and raised general hoop-la—"I have had my cake and et it."

New England does rest on her past. The fact is undeniable. One can't step for bronze plaques and carved granite reminders of it. Here Benjamin Franklin was born; here was the Boston Massacre; here Indians tomahawked the Goodrich family in sixteen hundred and something; here is the site of old Fort Number Four; at this spot British prisoners captured in the battle of Saratoga were allowed to meet once a week and converse "in full regimental regalia"; here Ephraim Wales Bull developed the Concord grape.

But New England is not dead. Even before the war the moribund factories were springing into life—new small, individual industries using the quarters once

occupied by one huge centrally operated mill. Businesses were forming to manufacture toys and furniture from the birch-clad hills, jewelry from native semiprecious stones. Farmers had discovered that nowhere can better apples be grown than in the Nashoba Valley, and that, although Idaho grows bigger potatoes, no other fields can grow whiter or mealier ones than the far-spread acres of Aroostook County, Maine. There was already a warm, new spirit of life. The war has electrified all New England into minute-man response.

For, although New England did not want this war, she has made it her own. In no part of the country is civilian defense so smartly efficient and smooth-working. Red Cross chapters turn out astounding quantities of knitting, bandages, and sewing. The Connecticut factories are nipping on the heels of their quotas of armaments and aircraft. War charities are generously oversubscribed, the old family names heading all lists with whopping donations. Blue-blooded sons have lined up with the Poles and the Greeks and the Czechs to enlist in all branches of the service. Saltonstall of Massachusetts, than whose blood none is bluer, is an outstanding war governor. He campaigned in a state where Mr. Roosevelt is hated by old-stock families as no President has been hated since Jefferson—pledged to an all-out war effort to support the Chief Executive. The Governor makes a personal as well as a public contribution to the war. He has a son in the Marines on Guadalcanal, another son in the Army, and a daughter in the Waves. He and his wife regularly give their pints of blood to the New

England Red Cross blood bank. He can also sit on the stage at Symphony Hall comfortably holding the water pitcher between his knees, as if that is what he was elected for, while Roland Hayes sings.

New England has accepted more than food rationing. She has accepted the whole war. She glorifies her past, but she respects her present. Perhaps her air of noblesse oblige in the Boston Herald headline was not so funny after all.

What I have been trying to say is that there will always be a New England. The lovely old names of towns—Pepperell, Townsend, Ashby, Fitzwilliam, Keene—will continue to march down the maps with the beautiful metrical beat of the Indian names setting the rhythm—Winnepesaukee, Wonalancet, Annisquam, Kennebec. The breath-stopping beauty of the land—a sudden sight of the shoulder of Ascutney, that bluest of mountains, the delicate trembling new green of birches in spring, anemones and painted trilliums beside the path in the Franconia Notch, the gray satin sheen of weathered clapboards on Cape Cod, the surging thunder of the Atlantic on the rocks at Marblehead, the shaggy grandeur of Ktaadn, rising like the epic head of Aeschylus—the beauty will remain. And out of the beauty and the past, New England will create new sons and daughters, no matter what their heritage, in her own image.

This is Barbara Parmelee's second article in COMMON GROUND. Her "Hans and Magda Meet the War" appeared in the Winter 1943 issue.

The illustrations are by Bernadine Custer.

WOODCUTS FOR AMERICANA

MELVIN B. TOLSON

OLD MAN MICHAEL

One day I idled into the field of wheat
Where Old Man Michael, spectrally boned and quaint,
Stooped over the tares that prickled at his feet—
A Celtic prophet or a Coptic saint.

We folk laughed down at him: the quiz of surprise
In dress and talk, the way he jogged his head
In feeding snowbirds, and cocked books at his eyes,
And snored in church as if it were a bed.

And then he towered, nailed the chat in me:
And I felt the myth of what a man should be.

"You farmers mope around," he said, "complain
About the crops, about the stubborn sod.
You blame the sun, the moon, the stars, the rain,
The lack of rain, the crows, the insects . . . God!

"It's drudgery to weed tares out of wheat,
These devilish darnels that grain-roots stupefy.
Yet, if the one is many, we shall cheat
The marketplace and lay a harvest by.

"Yes, if the one is many, kinds in kind,
We shall not leave a world of tares behind."

THE GALLOWS

He was my teacher a continent of years ago;
Yet bright as blood is the red-letter day he came
Into the drouth of the class, with his wits aflow,
To freshen the sesame in each alien name.

WOODCUTS FOR AMERICANA

Month after month, the pan of his alchemy
Found nuggets of gold where others found alloy.
And the miracle of his integrity
Put bone and blood and soul into girl and boy.

He dumped the debris of customs on the refuse heap,
He tore down fences propped with a great Amen,
He set apart the huddling goats and sheep,
He let the oxygen of the freedoms in.

The lame, the halt, the blind—these struck him down;
Then the gallows of ignorance hanged the little town.

THE MAN INSIDE

To the memory of
V. F. Calverton

They told me—the voices of hates in the land—
They told me that White is White and Black is Black;
That the children of Africa are scarred with a brand
Ineradicable as the stripes on the leopard's back.

They told me that gulfs unbridgeable lie
In the no man's seascapes of unlike hues,
As wide as the vertical of earth and sky,
As ancient as the grief in the seagull's mews.

They told me that Black is an isle with a ban
Beyond the pilgrims' Continent of Man.

I yearned for the mainland where my brothers live.
The cancerous isolation behind, I swam
Into the deeps, a naked fugitive,
Defying tribal fetishes that maim and damn.

And when the typhoon of jeers smote me and hope
Died like a burnt-out world and on the shore
The hates beat savage breasts, you threw the rope
And drew me into the catholic Evermore.

We stood on common ground, in transfiguring light,
Where the man inside is neither Black nor White.

COMMON GROUND

WHEN GREAT DOGS FIGHT

He came from a dead-end world of under breed,
A mongrel in his look and in his deed.

His head sagged lower than his spine, his jaws
Spooned wretchedly, his timid little claws
Were gnarls. A fear lurked in his rheumy eye
When dwarfing pedigrees paraded by.

Often he saw the bulldog, arrogant and grim,
Beside the formidable mastiff; and sight of them
Devouring chunks of meat with juices red
Needled pangs of hunger in his belly and head.

Sometimes he whimpered at the ponderous gate
Until the regal growls shook the estate;
Then he would scurry up the avenue,
Singing the hedges with his buttercup hue.

The spool of luckless days unwound, and then
The izzard cur, accurst of dogs and men,
Heard yelps of rage beyond the iron fence
And saw the jaws and claws of violence.

He padded through the gate that leaned ajar,
Maneuvered toward the slashing arcs of war,
Then pounced upon the bone; and winging feet
Bore him into the refuge of the street.

A sphinx haunts every age and every zone:
When great dogs fight, the small dog gets a bone.

Melvin B. Tolson is director of drama and debate at Wiley College, Marshall, Texas, and author of the long poem, "Rendezvous With America," which attracted wide attention in our Summer 1942 number.

VACATION DAZE

GEORGE S. SCHUYLER

THE problem of where to go on vacation and how to get the money for it is one which confronts every American family outside the ranks of the very wealthy in these days of war and high taxes. Perusal of the resort advertisements in the Sunday papers merely adds to one's confusion. But having decided where to go, how to spare the money, and when to leave, the average American family's troubles are over. One writes for reservations at the beginning of summer and then awaits the happy day of departure.

Even when the country is in the midst of a crusade for global democracy, however, the problem of the vacation-bent colored American family is immeasurably more complex. Here the smallest problem is the money, for even those in the most comfortable circumstances have a tough time finding a place to go. Resort advertisements are usually not intended for their attention. To them "restricted clientele," "selected clientele," and "Christian management" mean plainly "No Negro or Jews need apply," and not that certain moral standards and social status are required.

Of course there are places that welcome colored families of refinement but such resorts are as rare as Japanese Americans in Los Angeles. Almost none advertise in the daily and Sunday papers. A very few use the columns of labor, liberal, and radical publications, but a resort advertisement even in one of these does not guarantee that Negroes are wanted as guests. Many colored families have motored all

across the United States without being able to secure overnight accommodations at a single tourist camp or hotel. Not long ago a friend of mine saved himself a night's sleep in the desert by promising a tourist camp proprietor that if permitted to occupy the farthest cabin he would surely leave before dawn.

It is understood that the southern states from Maryland to Texas are the colored vacationist's No-Man's-Land, but it is not so generally understood (except by Negroes) that the same thing is true of the rest of the country. When three years ago a couple separated by the width of the continent tried to obtain reservations at some camp midway of the country, it was necessary for several of us to carry on protracted correspondence via Chicago, New York, Minneapolis, and Portland, Oregon, before a suitable place was found—and that was owned by a Negro.

But what of the civilized and democratic northeastern states where the tradition of acceptance and fairplay is strong and deep-seated, and where lack of color prejudice is widely and proudly professed? Surely this section with its innumerable seashore, forest, and mountain resorts, with every facility to satisfy the most exacting taste, should be a Mecca for colored vacationists.

Well, we wondered about it. So, perusing the resort section of the Sunday edition of a great metropolitan newspaper, we selected 105 places advertising for

COMMON GROUND

guests and sent the managers the following letter, last July 7:

"We are a colored family of three planning a two-week vacation between now and Labor Day, and I am writing to ascertain the possibility of securing accommodations at your place some time during that period.

"I shall appreciate an early reply."

From the 105 resorts we received 31 replies, a larger number than many dark cynics might have anticipated. It was comforting that so many were willing to let us know where we stood. Only one was favorable. It came from the *Anchor Inn* at Mount Pocono, Pennsylvania, and said, "We will be pleased to accommodate you and family," and supplied rates and terms.

Of the 74 places that did not deign to reply, we noted by careful perusal of resort advertisements later that a large number repeatedly advertised for guests. We concluded that their racial policy was somewhat akin to that of Herr Hitler.

To paraphrase the famous political saying, we found that "As the nation goes, so goes Maine." There were three replies to the thirteen letters sent there. *Jacksons Camps* on Lake Cobbseecontee enclosed a rate sheet which specified "Gentile Clientele," but our hearts really sank when we read that "there doesn't seem to be any camp in this vicinity that accommodates colored folks." The proprietress then proceeded to ask if we knew of a colored group which might want to buy the camp, adding "no one knows I am offering it for sale." Being vacationists and not realtors, we passed up this offer.

Belvedere Inn on Lake Maranacook "In the Land of Remembered Vacations," which boasts of "restricted clientele," was not helpful either. The manager wrote, "I regret to inform you that our house is booked to capacity, from now until Labor Day, and that we would be unable to accommodate your family of three persons."

He closed with the hope that we would "enjoy a most pleasant vacation in the State of Maine." Though "booked to capacity," *Belvedere* ran its advertisement for the next three weeks.

Green Acres at Canton stresses "restricted clientele" but boasts of being "A Friendly Place for Friendly People" and "without swank." Unfortunately it is not without race prejudice. On July 9 the manager wrote "no accommodations available." Yet on July 30 his advertisements indicated that the place was a little less than full.

The celebrated *Hotel Franconia* "In the White Mountains of New Hampshire" also caters only to "selected clientele." Though Manager Schill wrote, "We are entirely sold out from now until Labor Day, which is the time that we close for the season," he, too, kept his advertisement in the papers regularly—which seems so wasteful in times like these.

The New England Inn at Intervale, New Hampshire, phrased its refusal differently: "We are not in a position to offer you accommodations." Brief and blunt was Manager Sanborn of the *Winnepesaukee Farm* at Laconia, New Hampshire. "Am very sorry but we do not cater to colored people," he wrote. However, we enjoyed reading the illustrated folder he enclosed showing what his "restricted clientele" enjoyed.

Vermont. Shades of Ethan Allen and the Green Mountain Boys! Good old Republican Vermont. What would its verdict be? Seven out of ten resorts replied, a high average. The manager of the *Colonial Inn* at Arlington dwelt on the limited accommodations at his place and the fact that "we have guests that return year after year for their vacations, so you see it is impossible to accommodate your family."

Some of the Vermont bonifaces were apologetic. Mr. Hill of *Oakledge Manor*

on Lake Champlain hesitated to suggest that we come "as it would be quite a grave experiment both for you and for us. We have never had colored guests at Oakledge, and fear that our other guests might make you feel 'left out' of our activities entertainments." He was "genuinely sorry." We believed him.

Manchester's *Equinox House* replied after eleven days, "We have been trying to find a nice place in Manchester or vicinity which we could safely recommend for your consideration" and ventured the hope that we would enjoy our vacation in Vermont.

Camp Elizabeth Inn could do nothing for us but enclosed a list of places we might try in the neighborhood. The *Allenwood Inn* at Burlington not only sent its regrets but added that "The writer has made inquiry from the Chamber of Commerce of Burlington and cannot suggest anything."

Well, anyway, there was always Massachusetts where black Crispus Attucks was first to fall before British guns in our Revolution; where a company of Negroes fought at Bunker Hill, with black Salem Poor distinguishing himself by his bravery, and a colored man, Peter Salem, firing the shot that mortally wounded Major Pitcairn. From Massachusetts had gone 3,966 black soldiers to fight to preserve the Union, and sixty years later thousands more to cross the Atlantic "to make the world safe for democracy."

Massachusetts would not let us down. Of eleven resorts queried, six replied. The *Elm Arch Inn* at Falmouth was "filled up for July and August." The *Old Silver Beach* at West Falmouth was relieved to mention that the Army had taken it over. The *Englewood* at West Yarmouth had "no accommodation available that are (sic) suitable for you" but had "tried to find a place in this district but have not been able to."

Mr. Langworthy of Cape Cod's *Chat-ham Crest* was plainly disturbed. "I have not known what to say," he wrote. "Were it just a matter of myself and family, we could find pleasure in welcoming a colored family of standards similar to our own. But some of our other prospective guests might feel otherwise. Possibly their unjustified prejudices should be ignored." He wanted to know "about your family and yourself."

Very frank was Dr. Starbuck of *The Big House and Lodge* at Middlefield, who wrote, "I don't think you would enjoy a vacation in Middlefield. I know my clientele and the local people." Who were we to dispute him? Nor could we quarrel with J. T. Seller of Greenfield's *Weldon Hotel* who held that, "on account of the fact that all of our vacation people are white folks, we feel it would be very embarrassing for you to be the only colored party in the hotel and it would be exceedingly difficult for us to properly entertain you." So we passed up "The Beautiful Home Hotel." We might have told him, of course, that white people do not at all embarrass us, except when they try to apologize for their Negrophobia.

I was born in Rhode Island but I knew that would mean nothing to the four resort proprietors to whom I wrote, so I didn't mention it. It is just as well. One replied very candidly, "We do not take colored people and know of no one who does. Hoping you find the right place."

Of ten Connecticut resorts, three replied. The *Sea Breeze Hotel* at Milford was "entirely booked for the season." The *Pine Villa* at West Cornwall was also full and the manager explained that, "This is an unpresidedent (sic) year." Nevertheless it advertised regularly for guests after replying. Capt. Jack's *Happy Acres* at Middlefield was undoubtedly happy to announce that it was "swamped."

Out of nine New Jersey places, only

COMMON GROUND

one replied, the *Hotel Dennis* at Atlantic City, which was relieved to write that the Army had taken over. New Jersey's strong civil rights law may have induced this great silence because all the other hotels later advertised regularly for more and more guests.

We wondered if Pennsylvania with its tradition of Quaker liberalism, its Dutch tolerance, and its "City of Brotherly Love" would prove more promising. We wrote to ten resorts. One, previously mentioned, the *Anchor Inn* at Mount Pocono, welcomed us. The *Inn* at Buck Hill Falls reported on July 8 that it was "booked to capacity, and we do not have accommodations available,"—but kept advertising almost daily for guests. The *Bushkill Falls Hotel* at Bushkill, sent no letter but mailed a folder bearing the legend "Gentiles Only."

Our last resort was the Empire State. I live in New York State and my family has lived here since before the American Revolution as free men. One ancestor fought at Saratoga to make this Republic possible. But this cradle of Americanism is typically American where the dark vacationist is concerned. Our letters went from the Adirondacks to Long Island. Only four places out of the 26 replied. In view of the assertion of resort managers elsewhere that they were filled up until Labor Day, we were caught off balance by the reply from the *Hotel Monoquaya* that "due to conditions of the country and business, we have been obliged to reduce our service and staff to a minimum, and can only provide accommodations for the guests we now have for the season." Hard times must have hit the Adirondacks.

"Seventy-five per cent of our guests come before July fifteenth and remain until September," wrote the *Hotel Windsor* at Elizabethtown, having read our letter closely. The *Columbia* at Hurleyville was also "booked until after Labor Day." The

Forest Park Hotel on Lake Oquaga did not bother to elaborate on its statement that "We are a restricted club hotel." New York has a strong civil rights law, and we should not expect the managers of these public places to commit themselves.

It would obviously be futile to seek reservations at vacation resorts outside this northeastern area. There may be scattered havens where an American citizen is not barred because of skin color, but they are few and far between. Most Aframericans have no more access to the sea than Luxembourg, Switzerland, or Nepal. They can with far more justice and sincerity than Hitler cry out for *lebensraum* in the mountains, in the forests, and along the lakes, for with few exceptions every good vacation spot is closed to them. Aliens from Europe and Asia, criminals, and underworld characters can frequent these resorts without question, so long as they have the money. Yet American citizens of color are universally barred, though they pay taxes and rush to defend their country in time of peril.

These 105 proprietors, those who replied and those who did not, are typical middle-class Americans. Their attitude is the one prevailing in this country among its white citizens. One wonders whether they will be able to adjust themselves to the new order of things in a world in which white supremacy is probably destined to be relegated to the museum of antiquities. Many Negroes are frankly doubtful. But while we are all engaged in fighting to establish democracy abroad, is it too much to ask that we attempt at home to practice what we preach?

Well-known journalist, George S. Schuyler is already familiar to CG readers for earlier articles in its pages.

THE JEWS: FACT AND FICTION

EDWARD E. GRUSD

SOME time ago I bought acreage on which to build a house. I met the owner of the land, we reached an amicable agreement on price, I paid a deposit, and was given a receipt. Then, in the course of a pleasant chat, it came out that I was a Jew. The owner of the land turned seven different colors and stammered that he couldn't sell me the land, after all.

"I promised the man next door," he confessed shamefacedly, "that I'd never sell the land next to him to a Jew."

I looked at him as one might look at a curious geological specimen in a museum. He became terribly embarrassed under my gaze and assured me that "some of his best friends were Jews" and that he'd be glad to have me as a neighbor—but a promise was a promise, and he was a man of his word.

"There is scum," he sputtered in an attempted apology, "among all groups—among the Protestants, among the Catholics, and among the Jews."

"Precisely!" I answered. "Then why did you promise never to sell this land to Jews? Why didn't you promise never to sell it to—scum?"

He swallowed hard and looked away.

"By gum," he said, "you're right!"

What is the truth about the Jews? It would take volumes to treat the subject exhaustively, and I don't propose to exhaust anybody. But it should be said immediately that in a certain sense there is no such thing as "the Jews."

When you lump individuals of any

group together all the time, *either for good or evil*, you dehumanize them. This was cogently pointed out by Marie Syrkin in the last issue of this magazine. Individuals are thereby robbed of their individuality, pressed into a mythical mold of devil or angel, depending on the viewpoint of the writer. And no group is either devilish or angelic.

There are nearly five million of us in America, and we don't act alike, look alike, live alike, or think alike. This doesn't mean that some of us are "better" or "worse" than others; it merely means that we differ from each other in a multitude of ways. We are usually at loggerheads with each other on almost every conceivable subject. Not only the Bigger Things. When Orthodox Jews pray in their homes, part of the ritual consists of wrapping a leather thong, called *tvillin*, containing the sacred injunction to live according to the Law, about their foreheads and left arms. I know of a synagogue where half the congregation believed in winding the *tvillin* clockwise; the other half insisted on winding it counterclockwise. Result: the clockwiseites split off and formed a congregation of their own!

This may sound fantastic and rare, and it is; but it illustrates the kind of divisions that reign among us. For generations, Jewish leaders have been writing, preaching, pleading for "Jewish unity"—but there is no unity. American Jewry is divided into so many groups that he would be rash indeed who would boast of being able to enumerate them all—to say nothing of

expatiating on their different philosophies and viewpoints. Some Jews who argue for this "unity" are not even clear in their own minds what they mean. A few go so far as to advocate a creedal and ritualistic uniformity; the overwhelming majority, however, mean unity of action in common problems that face all Jews.

When a crisis arises in Jewish life—and they're always arising—there is usually the spectacle of a half dozen Jewish organizations advocating a half dozen different techniques to meet it. On rare occasions they join forces for unified action on a specific issue. That was the case when 32 leading national Jewish membership organizations, representing a million Jewish adults, met recently in Pittsburgh at a conference called by B'nai B'rith to discuss the possibility of united action for solution of the postwar Jewish problem and the upbuilding of Palestine. Out of that preliminary meeting grew the American Jewish Assembly, uniting those 32 organizations for those purposes.

Thoughtful Jewish leaders would like to see a similar united front when it comes to fighting anti-Semitism. Anti-Semitism is a menace to all Jews, whether they wind their *tvillin* clockwise or counterclockwise—or whether they don't observe that particular ritual at all. But here, too, there are basic differences in approach to the problem.

And that is only the beginning. Religiously the Jews are divided into three main groups: Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform. Don't let anybody tell you how many there are in each group, because nobody knows. There has never been a census. Moreover, the line of demarcation is often very vague and wavy. Many call themselves Orthodox without adhering to all the requirements laid down for the Orthodox by the pious. Some call themselves Reform who are more observant than some of the Orthodox.

Politically, the overwhelming majority are either Republicans or Democrats, and within those two parties they are distributed—like everybody else—among those who lean toward reactionary Republicanism, progressive Republicanism, orthodox Democracy, New Dealism, etc., depending largely on their economic conditioning. In other words, in their politics, Jews cannot be distinguished from any other group.

Economically and socially, Jews are likewise divided. For every Jewish millionaire or rich man, there are perhaps fifty thousand slum-dwelling needle workers, petty shopkeepers, or small artisans. There are 110,000 Jewish college students. And right now, of course, there are several hundred thousand Jews in the armed forces.

There is a legend that the first white man to set foot in the New World was one of Columbus' crew, named de Torres, a Marrano Jew. But it is a matter of history that the first Jews to settle in what is now the United States consisted of a group of refugees fleeing from the Spanish Inquisition in Brazil. They landed in New Amsterdam in 1654, nearly three hundred years ago. There have been Jews in this country ever since, in slowly growing numbers. By 1776 there were 3,000, and the annals of the American Jewish Historical Society contain a long list of those who served under Washington in the Revolutionary War. There were about 20,000 in the early 1840s when America's oldest Jewish fraternal and service organization—B'nai B'rith, which will celebrate its centenary this year—was founded. And there were a quarter million in 1881, when the great waves of Jewish immigration from Czarist Russia and eastern Europe began. By 1916 there were some three and a half million, and a quarter million wore khaki in '17 and '18.

THE JEWS: FACT AND FICTION

But since the early 1920s, the country's gates have been virtually closed to all immigrants. That means that practically every Jew in his early twenties was born here—plus hundreds of thousands of older ones, some of them second-, third-, and even sixth-generation natives.

American Jewry is thus a community in a stage of transition. There is a great difference, temperamentally and in other ways, between the American-born Jew and his foreign-born father or grandfather. (This, of course, is a group problem, true of all peoples.) The Jew from the ghettos or slums of Poland or Russia lived a life distinctive from the life by which he was surrounded. He was a frequent victim of persecution and discrimination. He adhered to a more or less rigid religious form. Opportunities were limited. If his father was a shoemaker, chances were that he became one. He was sent to the Jewish school as soon as he could toddle, and he pored over the Talmud for ten and twelve hours a day. With notable exceptions, he did not know much about "the outside world." Secular learning was considered almost subversive in many households. At sixteen or eighteen he was married off, usually by a marriage broker, to a girl he had never seen before, and by twenty-one he was a *paterfamilias*, rooted in his ways, going to the synagogue three times a day—or at least every Sabbath. When a baron or big landowner came along, he had to be properly respectful. He might be the victim of a pogrom and have to bolt his door and quake in his cellar while the rowdies tore through town. The end of it all, for millions, was to steal quietly away from their native land in the dead of night, cross into Germany, and take ship for America—suffering for weeks in the foul steerage. Then came the Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island, and a new and bewildering life, where the

language, customs, people, and laws were all strange and different.

These immigrants—not only the Jews but all the others—generally became good Americans, who toiled and sweated, humbly for the most part, and built up this country. They reared families; they became part of the warp and woof of America. But they could never erase from their minds the memories of their sufferings and their experiences abroad.

Consider now their children and grandchildren. Born in America, they go to public school and mix with other children, Jew and Christian, black and white, on a basis of equality. Instead of bending for twelve hours a day over the heavy tomes of the Talmud like their fathers, they spend a half dozen hours studying English and history and literature and mathematics and other similarly subversive subjects. After school they go in for athletics, games, recreation. On Saturdays—a holy day of rest for their forefathers—many play baseball or go to the movies, and when they grow up they work on that day if they want to keep their jobs.

They bow down before no lord or baron—this is America! No pogromchik appears on the streets to terrorize them. They do not have to steal away in the night to some strange land. They have no dark memories of Europe and a different world. America and what it means is their all-in-all, the country they live for and the country they will gladly die for.

A new type of Jew thus is being born and bred here. And between him and his foreign-born grandfather there are Jews of infinite gradations.

There are native Jews—modern and streamlined—who are traditionally observant of all the rights and ceremonies of their ancient faith. And there are native Jews who are abysmally ignorant of these

COMMON GROUND

things. There are foreign-born scholars—and foreign-born patriarchs who know nothing about Judaism except prayers whose meaning they don't understand. There are Jews who refuse to work on Saturdays regardless of the personal sacrifice involved, there are Jews who attend the synagogue only on the high holidays, and there are Jews who never go to the synagogue.

There are Jews who consider themselves different, as a group, from all other people, and Jews who fiercely maintain that their religion is the only difference between them and everybody else, like the newly-formed Council for American Judaism. There are Jews who are passionate Zionists, who testify that by being good Zionists they are better Americans (the late Louis D. Brandeis was among them), and there are Jews who have no interest in Zionism whatsoever, and Jews who are violently antagonistic to it. There are perhaps thirty different groups within the Zionist movement alone—and yet the majority of American Jews are not members of any of them.

There are Jews whose mother tongue is Yiddish, and Jews who don't know a word of any language but English, and there are those who speak both, plus Hebrew. There are (or recently were) a few Jews with yachts, and many Jews whose entire stock of worldly goods would fit nicely in a wheelbarrow; Jews who, from living with large families in one crowded slum dwelling, shout to make themselves heard, and suave, soft-spoken, college-educated Jewish professional and business men. Most Jews are, of course, concerned about anti-Semitism, and there are those who believe in taking militant steps to fight it, but others who say, "Hush, the best policy is to pay no attention." There are Jews like Governor Lehman and Hank Greenberg and Albert Einstein and Eddie Cantor and Henry

Morgenthau, whose names are known to all Americans; and there are Jews so humble and poor and unsuccessful and obscure that nobody outside of their families know they even exist.

There are Jews so chauvinistic they are eager to claim as fellows any person born of Jewish parents, regardless of the individual's own desires in the matter, and at the other extreme there are Jews who hardly recognize as a Jew anyone who does not conform to standardized customs and ceremonies.

There are Jews who fear that regardless of which way the war ends, they will once more be the victims of persecution and discrimination, and there are others—the great majority—who have a deathless confidence in the essential integrity of the American masses to see that justice is done to all people after the war.

As the editor of the largest English-Jewish magazine in the United States, it is my job to read practically the entire Jewish press, correspond with rabbis, writers, and other leaders of Jewish thought, and travel to many communities for speeches and conventions and meetings with local Jewish leaders. I have been doing this for fourteen years, and in that time I have met and come to know, mentally and physically, many thousands of American Jews. Yet I would be the last person in the world to generalize about "the Jews." You simply cannot do it. Anyone who does is either malicious or irresponsible. The thousands whom I know firsthand are the general run of human beings—individuals, about whom there is nothing either exalted or sinister.

They have only one thing in common: they are Jews. And that means different things to different people. It even means different things to different Jews. There is a minority which deplores the accident of birth that made them Jewish. Such

THE JEWS: FACT AND FICTION

people do everything in their power to escape their Jewishness. They are generally scorned and despised by the great bulk of the Jewish people, who are proud of their ancient lineage and great traditions. Many Jews who know no more about those traditions than an Australian bushman are still proud of them.

Without at all falling for the Nazis' so-called "racial theory," one can say that the Jews are a people—and that is my only generalization. Whether any given individual Jew likes it or not—whether he is even conscious of it or not—the Jewish people, despite all their incredible and colorful diversification, have a common religious, cultural, and historical heritage that goes back more than three thousand years. In all those millennia—as today—this people, like all other peoples, has contributed its talents, toil, and genius to mankind and civilization. It still contains within itself the potentialities of endless additional contributions. Its forms are changing in America, as they have changed elsewhere throughout history, acclimatizing themselves to time and place, which is the condition of all survival. But the content of Judaism, as preserved through the ages by the Jewish people, lives on—a great reservoir of culture and wisdom and beauty. The fact that not all Jews slake their thirst at this reservoir is not basic. In the generations of Moses and Isaiah and Jeremiah and Hillel the same conditions obtained—that is why the Prophets of Israel were moved to give voice to their thunderous preachments in the first place.

Most of the responsible leaders of American Jewry—religious, educational, and organizational—stand foursquare for the construction of a vital, patriotic, civic-minded and Jewishly-informed American Jewry. They believe such a community can be built even within the framework

of the myriad divisions that exist within the Jewish people. They point out that Judaism and Americanism both have democracy as their central concept and that if democracy means anything it means the right of all groups to develop the best that is within them for their own and the common good.

Individuals within any society will always differ healthily, we hope, and so will groups within groups, but strengthened and enriched by this very diversity, the society they together compose can march slowly forward toward a better world. We Jews here stand or fall with the rest of America, itself a symphony of peoples. If we have faults, let him cast the first stone who is without them. If we have virtues, so do all other groups. Now—regardless of our almost countless differences—we American Jews have joined forces on the main battle; we fight shoulder to shoulder on every front with our fellow Americans of other creeds and descent to destroy forever the monster of fascism which threatens us all.

That fight is the important issue today. Our ability to win is lessened by those who divide our ranks through the Nazi technique of reaction—setting group against group. Americans who really know each other—who are guided by the facts and not misled by the fictions—are the main hope of the world when it comes to winning this war and the peace that will follow.

Edward E. Grusd has been editor of The National Jewish Monthly, published by B'nai B'rith, for the last 15 years. Earlier he was on the editorial staffs of the Columbus, Ohio, Citizen, the Cincinnati Post, and the Omaha World-Herald, and for six months wrote special articles for the Ohio State Journal while roving through Europe.

CROSSROADS

WOODY GUTHRIE

THERE was big drops of sweat standing out on my forehead and my fingers didn't feel like they was mine. I was floating in high finances, sixty-five stories above the ground, leaning my elbow on a stiff-looking tablecloth as white as a runaway ghost, and tapping my finger on the side of a big fishbowl. The bowl was full of clear water with a bright red rose as wide as your hand sunk down in the water, which made the rose look bigger and redder and the leaves greener than they actually was. But everything else in the room looked this same way when you looked through the rose bowls of water on the other twenty-five or thirty tables. Each row of tables was in a horseshoe curve, and each curve a little higher than the one below. I was at the lowest. The price of the table for the night was twenty-five dollars.

Sixty-five stories back to the world. Quite a little elevator ride down to where the human race was being run. The name of the place, the Rainbow Room, in the city called New York, in the building called Rockefeller Center, where the shrimps are boiled in Standard Oil. I was waiting to take an audition to see about getting a job singing there. Classiest joint I'd ever seen. I looked all around at the deep rugs like a grassy lawn, and the wavy drapes bellied back from the windows, and laughed to myself as I heard the other performers crack jokes at the whole works.

"This must be th' ravin' ward, th' way they got things all padded up." A sissy-

looking little man in a long tail coat was waiting for his time to try out.

"I just don't think they mowed th' upholst'ry yet this year," some lady with a accordion folded acrost her lap was whispering.

"An' them tables," I almost laughed, saying, "is jest like this here buildin': th' higher up ya git, th' colder it gits."

The man that had been our guide and got us up there in the first place walked across the rug with his nose in the air like a trained seal, grinned up at us waiting to take our tryouts, and said, "Ssshhh. Quiet, everybody."

Everybody slumped down and straightened up and set tight and got awful quiet while three or four men, and a lady or two dressed to match the fixtures, walked in through a high arch door from the main terrace and took seats at one of the tables.

"Main boss?" I said behind the back of my hand to the others at our table.

Heads shook up and down, "Yes." I noticed that everybody put on a different face, like wax people almost, tilting their heads in the breeze, grinning into the late afternoon sun that fell across the floor, and smiling like they'd never missed a meal. This look is the look that most show folks learn pretty early in the game; they paint it on their faces, or sort of mold it on, so it will always smile like a monkey through his bars, so nobody will know their rent ain't paid up yet, or they ain't had no job this season or last, and that they just finished a sensational, whirl-

CROSSROADS

wind run of five flops in a row. The performers looked like rich customers shining in the sun, and the head boss with his table full of middle-size bosses looked like they'd been shot at and missed. Through the water in the rose bowls everything in the place had an upside-down look; the floor looked like the ceiling and the halls looked like the walls, and the hungry looked like they was rich, and the rich looked like they was hungry.

Finally somebody must of made a motion or give a signal, because a girl in a gunny-sack dress got up and sung a song that told how she was already going on thirteen, and was getting pretty hot under the collar, tired of waiting and afraid of being an old maid, and wanting to be a hillbilly bride. Heads shook up and down and the big boss and middle-size bosses and agents and handlers smiled across the empty tables. I heard somebody whisper, "She's hired."

"Next! Woody Guthrie!" a snazzy-looking gent was saying over the mike.

"Reckin that's me," I was mumbling under my chin, talking to myself, and looking out the window, thinking. I reached in my pocket and spun a thin dime out acrost the tablecloth and watched it whirl around and around, first heads, then tails, and said to myself, "Some difference 'tween that there aperecot orchard las' June where th' folks wuz stuck down along th' river bottom, an' this here Rainbow Room on an August afternoon. Gosh, I come a long ways in th' last few months. Ain't made no money ta speak about, but I've stuck my head in a lot of plain an' fancy places. Some good, some just barely fair, an' some awful bad. I wrote up a lot of songs for union folks, sung 'em all over ever'where, wherever folks got together an' talked an' sung, from Madison Square Garden to a Cuban Cigar Makers' tavern in Spanish Harlem an hour later; from th' padded studios of CBS an' NBC to th'

wild back country in th' raggedy ghetto. In some places I was put on display as a freak, an' others as a hero, an' in th' tough joints around th' Battery I wuz jes' another shadow blund'rin' along with th' rest. It was like this here little ol' dime spinnin', a whirl of heads an' tails. I'd liked mostly th' union workers an' th' soldiers an' th' men in fightin' clothes, shootin' clothes, shippin' clothes, or farmin' clothes, 'cause singin' with them made me friends with them, an' I felt like I was somehow in on their work. But this coin spinnin', that's my las' dime—an' this Rainbow Room job, well, rumors are it'll pay as much as seventy-five a week, an' seventy-five a week is damn shore seventy-five a week."

"Woody Guthrie!"

"Comin'!" I walked up to the microphone, gulping and trying to think of something to sing about. I was a little blank in the head or something, and no matter how damn hard I tried, I just couldn't think up any kind of a song to sing—just empty.

"What will be your first selection, Mister Guthrie?"

"Little tune, I guess, called New York City." And so I forked the announcer out of the way with the wiry end of my guitar handle and made up these words as I sung:

*This Rainbow Room she's mighty fine,
You can spit from here to th' Texas
line!*

*In New York City,
Lord, New York City,
This is New York City, an' I really
gotta know my line!*

*This Rainbow Room is up so high
That John D.'s spirit comes a-driftin'
by.*

*This is New York City,
She's New York City,
I'm in New York City an' I really
gotta know my line!*

COMMON GROUND

*New York town's on a great big boom,
Got me a-singin' in th' Rainbow Room.*

That's New York City,

That's New York City,

*She's old New York City where I
really gotta know my line!*

I took the tune to church, took it holy roller, shot in a few split notes, oozed in a fake one, come down barrel house, hit off a good old cross-country lonesome note or two, trying to get that old guitar to help me, to talk with me, talk for me, say what I was thinking, just this one time.

*Well, this Rainbow Room's a funny
place ta play,
It's a long way's from here to th'
U.S.A.*

An' back ta New York City,

God! New York City,

*Hey! New York City where I really
gotta know my line!*

The microphone man come running out and waved me to a stop, asking me, "Hhmmm, where does this particular song end, sir?"

"End?" I looked over at him. "Jest a-gittin' strung out good, mister!"

"The number is most amusing. Exciting. Extremely colorful. But I'm wondering if it would be suited to the customers. Ahemmm. To our customers. Just a couple of questions. How do you get out to the microphone and back again?"

"Walk, as a rule."

"That won't do. Let's see you trot in through that arch doorway there, sidestep when you come to that flat platform, prance pretty lively when you go down those three stairs, and then spring up to the microphone on the balls of your feet throwing your weight on the joints of your ankles." And before I could say anything he had run out and trotted back, showing me exactly what he was talking about.

Another one of the bosses from the

table at the back wall yelled, "As far as his entrance is concerned, I think we can rehearse it a week or two and get it ironed out!"

"Yes! Of course his microphoning has got to be tested and lights adjusted to his size, but that can come later. I'm thinking about his make-up. What kind of make-



up do you use, young man?" Another boss was talking from his table.

"Ain't been a-usin' none," I talked into the mike. I felt the faraway rattling and rumbling of freight trains and transfer trucks calling to me. I bit my tongue and listened.

"Under the lights, you know, your natural skin would look too pale and too dead. You wouldn't mind putting on some kind of make-up just to liven you up, would you?"

"Naww. Don't 'spose." Why was I thinking one thing in my head and saying something different with my mouth?

"Fine!" A lady nodded her head from the boss's table. "Now, oh yes, now, what kind of a costume shall I get for him?"

"Which?" I said, but nobody heard me.

She folded her hands together under her chin and clicked her wax eyelashes together like loose shingles in a high wind. "I can just imagine a hay wagon piled high with singing field hands, and this carefree character following along in the dust behind the wagon singing after the day's work is done! That's it. A French peasant garb!

"Or—no—wait! I see him as a Louisiana swamp dweller, half asleep on the flat top of a gum stump, his feet dangling in the mud, and his gun leaning near his head. Ah! What a follow-up for the gunny-sack girl singing 'Hillbilly Bride'!" A man losing a wrestling match with a four-bit cigar was arguing with the lady.

"I have it! Listen! I have it!" The lady rose up from her table with a look on her face like she was in a trance of some kind, and she walked over across the carpet to where I was standing, saying, "I have it! Pierrot! We shall dress him in a Pierrot costume! One of those darling clown suits! It will bring out the life and the pep and the giddy humor of his period! Isn't that a simply swell idea?" She folded her hands under her chin again and swayed over against my shoulder as I side-stepped to miss her. "Imagine! What the proper costuming will bring out in these people! Their carefree life! Open skies! The quaint simplicity. Pierrot! Pierrot!" She was dragging me across the floor by the arm, and we left the room with everybody talking at once. Some taking tryouts said, "Gosh! Goin' ta catch on!"

Outside, on a high glass porch of some kind where wild tangled green things grewed all along the floor by the windows, she shoved me down in a leather chair

by a plastic table and sighed and puffed like she'd done an honest day's work. "Now, let me see, oh yes, now, my impression of the slight sample of your work is a bit, so to say, incomplete, that is, as far as the cultural traditions represented and the exchange and interrelationships and overlappings of these same cultural patterns are concerned, especially here in America, where we have, well, such a mixing bowl of culture, such a stew-pot of shades and colors. But, nevertheless, I think the clown costume will represent a large portion of the humorous spirit of all of them— and—"

I let my ears bend away from her talking and I let my eyes drift out the window and down sixty-five stories where the town of old New York was standing up living and breathing and cussing and laughing down yonder acrost that long island.

I begun to pace back and forth, keeping my gaze out the window, way down, watching the diapers and underwear blow from fire escapes and clothes lines on the back sides of the buildings; seeing the smoke whip itself into a hazy blur that smeared across the sky and mixed in with all of the other smoke that tried to hide the town. Limp papers whipped and beat upwards, rose into the air and fell head over heels, curving over backwards and sideways, over and over, loose sheets of newspaper with pictures of people and stories of people printed somewhere on them, turning loops in the air. And it was blow little paper, blow! Twist and turn and stay up as long as you can, and when you come down, come down on a pent-house porch, come down easy so's not to hurt yourself. Come down and lay there in the rain and the wind and the soot and smoke and the grit that gets in your eyes in the big city—and lay there in the sun and get faded and rotten. But keep on trying to tell your message, and keep on

COMMON GROUND

trying to be a picture of a man, because without that story and without that message printed on you there, you wouldn't be much. Remember, it's just maybe, some day, sometime, somebody will pick you up and look at your picture and read your message, and carry you in his pocket, and lay you on his shelf, and burn you in his stove. But he'll have your message in his head and he'll talk it and it'll get around. I'm blowing, and just as wild and whirling as you are, and lots of times I've been picked up, throwed down, and picked up; but my eyes has been my camera taking pictures of the world and my songs has been messages I tried to scatter across the back sides of buildings and along the steps of the fire escapes and on the window sills and through the dark halls.

Still going like a Nineteen Hundred and Ten talking machine, my lady friend had said a whole raft of stuff that I'd not heard a single word of. My ears had been running somewhere down along the streets. I heard her say, "So, the interest manifest by the manager is not at all a personal thing, not at all, not at all; but there is another reason why you are so certain to satisfy the desires of his customers; and I always say, don't you always say, 'What the customer says is what we all have to say?'" Her teeth shined and her eyes snapped different colors. "Don't you?"

"Don't I? What? Oh, 'scuse me jest a minute, huh? Be right back." I took one good long look all up and down the red leather seats and the plastic tables in the glassed-in room, and grabbed my guitar by the neck and said to a boy in uniform, "Rest room?" And I followed where he pointed, except that when I got within a couple of feet of the sign that said "Men," I took a quick dodge down a little hallway that said "Elevator."

The lady shook her head and nodded

with her back turned to me. And I asked the elevator man, "Goin' down? Okay. Groun' floor. Quickest way's too slow!"

When we hit bottom, I walked out onto the slick marble floor whanging as hard as I could on the guitar and singing:

*Ever' good man gits in hard luck
sometime,*

*Ever' good man gits in hard luck
sometime;*

Gits down an' out,

Dead broke,

Ain't got a dime!

I never heard my guitar ring so loud and so long and so clear as it did there in them high-polished marble halls. Every note was ten times as loud, and so was my singing. I filled myself full of free air and sung as loud as the building would stand. I wanted the poodle dogs leading the ladies around to stick up their noses and wonder what in the hell had struck that joint. People had walked hushed up and too nice and quiet through these tiled floors too long. I decided that for this minute, for this one snap of their lives, they'd see a human walking through that place, not singing because he was hired and told what to sing, but just walking through there thinking about the world and singing about it.

Folks in herds and family groups stopped looking in the fancy lit-up shop windows along the corridors and listened to me telling the world:

*Old John Dee, he ain't no friend
of mine,*

*Old John Dee, he ain't no friend
of mine;*

*I'm a-sayin' Old John Dee shore
ain't no friend of mine,*

Takes all th' purty wimmen

An' leaves us men behind!

Little boys and girls trotted up alongside of me, jerking out from their parents' hands, and kept their ears and noses rub-

CROSSROADS

bing against my guitar's sounding board. While I was beating the blues chords and not singing, I heard side remarks:

"What's he advertising?"

"Isn't he a card?"

"Quaint."

"A Westerner. Possibly lost in a subway."

"Children! Come back here!"

I heard a cop say, "Cut it! Hey! Yez can't pull dat stuff in here!" But before he could get at me, I'd whirled through a spinning door and fought my way across some avenues packed with traffic, and was lighting out along some sidewalks and not even paying much attention to where I was heading. A few hours could of went by. Or days. I wasn't noticing. But I was dodging walking people, playing kids, and rusting iron fences, rotting doorsteps, and my head was buzzing, trying to think up some reason why I'd darted out away from the sixty-fifth story of that big high building back yonder. But something in me must have knowed.

In a little while I found myself walking along New York's Ninth Avenue and cutting over another long cement block to come to the waterfront. I seen mothers perched on high rock steps and out along the curbs on cane-bottom chairs, some in the shade, some in the sun, talking talking, talking. Their gift of the spirit was talking, talking to the mother or to the lady next to them, about the wind, the weather, the curbs, the sidewalks, the rooms, roaches, bugs, rent, and the landlord, and managing to keep one eye on all the hundreds and hundreds of kids playing in the open street. As I walked along, no matter what they'd been talking about, I heard them, first to one side and then to the other, saying "Music man!" "Heyyy! Playa for ussa th' song!" "Hi! Le's hear ya tromp it!" "Would you geeve to us a museek?" "Play!" "Ser'nade me!" And so, there in the last few patches

of the setting sun, I walked along winding my way through the women and young boys and girls, singing:

What does the deep sea say?

Tell me, what does the deep sea say?

Well, it moans and it groans,

It swells and it foams,

And it rolls on its weary way!

I walked along, the day just leaving out over the tops of the tall buildings and sifting through the old scarred chimneys. A little girl and boy clattered by on roller skates and told me to sing louder so's they could hear me above the noise. Other kids quit swatting each other and walked along listening. Mamas called in a hundred



tongues, "Kids, come back here!" The kids would usually follow along humming and singing with me for about a block and then stand on the curb when I crossed the street and look for a long time. In each block a new gang formed and herded

COMMON GROUND

along, feeling of the wood of the guitar, and getting their hands on the strap, the strings. Older kids tittered and flirted in dark doorways and pushed each other around in front of soda fountains and penny-candy hangouts, and I managed to sing them at least a little snatch, a few words of the songs they'd ask to hear. At times I stopped for a minute and papas and mamas and kids of all ages stood around as quiet as they could, but the whamming and banging of big trucks, busses, vans, and cars made us stand jammed together real tight to be heard.

It got to be night, the kind of summer night that pitches on the wind and dips in the white clouds and makes buildings look like all kinds of freighters creaking along. Dark swarms of us sprawled out along stone steps and iron railings, and I felt that old feeling coming back to me. Thank the good Lord, everybody, everything ain't all slicked up, and starched and imitation. Thank God, everybody ain't afraid. Afraid in the skyscrapers, and afraid in the red tape offices, and afraid

in the tick of the little machine that never explodes, stock market tickers that scare how many to death, ticking off deaths, marriages and divorces, friends and enemies; tickers connected and plugged in like juke boxes, playing the false and corny lies that are sung in the wild canyons of Wall Street; songs wept by the families that lose, songs jingled on the silver spurs of the men that win. Here on the slummy edges, people were crammed down on the curbs and the sidewalks and the fireplugs, and cars and trucks and kids and rubber balls were bouncing through the streets.

Here I could sing free.

COMMON GROUND is proud of having been the first to publish Woody Guthrie's work—"Ear Players" in the Spring 1942 issue and "State Line to Skid Row" in the Autumn 1942 number. "Crossroads" is part of a chapter of Mr. Guthrie's first book, *Bound for Glory*, to be published by Dutton in March.

The drawings are by David Fredenthal.

FREEDOM FROM FEAR AND WANT

The New Canaan, they called this land of plenty and security in the days of "America fever." Searching for their freedoms, men came to it from the four corners of the globe.

Now we fight that all men everywhere may know these freedoms too—that children all over the world may laugh again; that quiet once more may come to the cities and the fields; that man—released from tyranny and want—may grow toward self-fulfillment.

THE FORGOTTEN MEXICAN

CAREY McWILLIAMS

SHORTLY after Mexico declared war against the Axis, President Camacho, in a broadcast in Spanish, urged his compatriots in this country "to forget the War of 1846" and reminded them that the United States and Mexico are now allies. That the War of 1846 should still be an active memory among Mexicans, particularly along the border, will doubtless strike many Americans as slightly fantastic. Yet in Mexico maps are still in use, in some of the schools, which carry an overprint designating the territory along the northern border as "territory temporarily in the hands of the United States." It is significant that President Camacho should have addressed his appeal to Mexicans living in the United States. For it is this large group of Mexicans who are perhaps most conscious of the memories of the past and most susceptible to anti-American propaganda.

When we broadcast Good Neighbor programs in Spanish, it seldom occurs to us that there is a sizable Mexican population in our midst and that the Good Neighbor policy might very well start here at home within our own borders. For here is the real, the living, the historical frontier of Latin American relations. No matter how generous we may be south of the border, our good intentions will be wasted unless we meet the acid test of applying at home what we preach abroad, unless our domestic attitudes are brought into conformance with our foreign policy.

No one can state, with even a pretense of statistical accuracy, the number of Mexicans residing within the United States. For years the counts made by the two governments, of movements back and forth across the border, have been in violent disagreement, and complete reconciliation of these figures has never been achieved. The problem is further complicated by the fact that with Mexicans the distinction between native-born and foreign-born is utterly unrealistic (particularly in the Southwest where the bulk of the Mexicans reside). In Texas and California, for example, the rule obtains that "Once a Mexican, always a Mexican." Immigrant stocks of high visibility and low economic status retain their minority status over long periods of time, even though, by birth or naturalization, they may have acquired citizenship. It is currently estimated that at least 2,000,000 Spanish-speaking people reside in the states of Texas, Colorado, Arizona, and New Mexico; and some observers have placed the total for the United States as high as 3,000,000. Approximately 500,000 are aliens and the rest are citizens. From the point of view of cultural adaptation, they fall into several categories: the long-resident Spanish-colonial group, all of whom are citizens; the fairly recent immigrants, most of whom are aliens but who have American-born children who are citizens; and, lastly, older immigrant groups who have become stranded in a number of urban areas.

II

Of the Mexican immigrants, most of whom are migratory workers, much has been written. The general circumstances surrounding their recruitment, the manner of their distribution, and details on living and working conditions have been carefully documented in excellent studies by Dr. Manuel Gamio and Dr. Paul S. Taylor; and in *Factories in the Field* and *Ill Fares the Land*, and in a previous article in this magazine, "Mexicans to Michigan" (Autumn 1941), I have already given a detailed account of the vast armies of Mexican migratory workers who follow the crops throughout the Southwest and as far north as Michigan, Montana, Indiana, and Ohio.

Two general considerations must be kept in mind. These migratory workers are a highly mobile group, many of them more or less habitual interstate migrants. Their very mobility has served to retard, if not altogether to prevent, opportunities for adjustment and assimilation. In the second place, wherever they go in their long and endless peregrinations, they are socially ostracized and sharply set apart from the resident "white" communities. For instance, approximately 93,100 Mexicans are contract sugar beet workers. Practices in the sugar beet industry have long required that the Mexican family migrate as a group, since all or most of the members must work in the fields. (Similar practices are followed in most of the other crops in which Mexicans are employed as agricultural migrants.) As a consequence, the Mexican immigrant continues to speak Spanish, to live among his own group, and to follow his own mode of living. Not even in the most superficial sense does he have an opportunity to become acculturated. These large migratory movements are, moreover, fed from certain central points, such as Los Angeles, El Paso, Denver, and San

Antonio, from which the labor is recruited. In these wintering communities, the Mexican migrant lives in a Mexican shacktown, continues to speak Spanish, and remains set apart from the larger community; he is ill-housed, ill-clothed, and ill-fed. His children are retarded in the schools and in many areas do not even attend schools. From every point of view, Mexican migratory workers (most of whom are fairly recent immigrants) constitute a definitely disadvantaged submerged class in our society. They are the victims of a well-organized caste system which dooms them to restricted types of employment, visits upon them a complex and comprehensive system of social discrimination, and makes for chronic maladjustment. The system, moreover, tends by its very nature to be self-perpetuating.

The well-being of these Mexican migrants, who number close to a million men, women, and children, is a matter of the utmost concern to the furtherance and the permanence of the Good Neighbor policy. Their plight is well-known to Mexican officials. Dr. Manuel Gamio, the historian of Mexican immigration to the United States, is today a highly-placed official in the Mexican government. Every "incident" affecting these people has immediate repercussions in Mexico. The significance of the group, in terms of our international relations, is self-evident. Our continued neglect of their well-being not only threatens to jeopardize the Good Neighbor policy, but materially weakens the national defense effort. Pro-fascist groups, such as the *Sinarquistas*, have consistently addressed their propaganda to the deep-seated unrest and latent hostility among these people.

Antagonisms engendered over a period of years cannot be eliminated overnight by a few radio broadcasts in Spanish and occasional gestures of goodwill. The problem of the Mexican in the United States

THE FORGOTTEN MEXICAN

is, moreover, merely one phase of our general color-caste system, and, as such, is deeply rooted in American society. That we have so long been blind to the development of this general system is largely due to the fact that we have failed to correlate its various phases. In the course of the general westward shift of population, a geographical segregation of racial "color-groups" has taken place in the United States: the Negro in the South; the Mexicans in the Southwest; and the Orientals on the Pacific Coast. Oriental and Mexican immigration brought to the Southwest and the Pacific Coast a racially colored population which, over a period of years, has come to be fitted into a status system much like that which prevails through the Deep South.

The parallel between the Oriental on the Pacific Coast and the Mexican in the Southwest is, in many respects, most striking. The growth of large resident elements of both groups was, roughly speaking, somewhat parallel in point of time, with the Mexican element emigrating in large numbers later than the Orientals (principally from 1910 to 1930 but dating from 1900). Just as each successive wave of Oriental immigration—Chinese, Japanese, and Filipino—met with an increasingly hostile resistance and ultimately with exclusion, so the pattern has developed with the Mexican. As tides of Mexican immigration swept northward across the border, a strong reaction swiftly developed. The argument against them shifted rapidly from the familiar contention that they constituted unfair economic competition to the equally familiar contention that they were "a racially undesirable element." This general sentiment crystallized in the early '20s in the movement to exclude them altogether, just as the Orientals had been excluded earlier. Both the Box Bill and the Harris Bill were designed to restrict Mexican immigration

by placing it on a quota basis. While neither measure passed, the objectives sought were, in fact, realized. With the creation of the Border Patrol, the strict enforcement of the immigration laws, and by tacit agreement on the part of both countries, further Mexican immigration virtually ceased in 1929. Thus the final outcome of the anti-Mexican agitation roughly approximated the outcome of the anti-Oriental movement on the Coast. The arguments in favor of and opposed to Mexican immigration followed the familiar pattern of pseudo-sociological and bogus anthropological nonsense that characterized every hearing on Oriental immigration. In both cases, the issues were kicked around by special interest groups, with the government of the United States, as such, having virtually nothing to say in the course of the debate and no voice in the outcome.

This singular lack of national concern over a problem of such magnitude as Mexican immigration is, in retrospect, almost incredible. For the movement of over a million Mexican workers to the United States in such a short period of time has rightly been characterized as the most significant mass movement of population between two republics of the Western Hemisphere. It has been a movement fraught with the utmost consequences, not only to the people involved, but to existing relations between the two republics. Although this migration was of enormous social and economic significance, its direction and use was left to chance and the personal advantage of individuals interested in the exploitation of human labor. "Friendly co-operative international action," remarks Mr. Ernesto Galarza, "was taken by the governments of the United States and Mexico with regard to the exchange of goods, the adjustment of boundaries and the flow of water, but never, so far as I know, with regard to the

flow of working men, women, and children." Just as we utterly ignored the initial migration itself (until we were forced to stop it in the course of a clumsy and irritating display of national self-interest), so we have neglected its continuing consequences. No effort whatever has been made, on a national scale, to assist these immigrants in their adjustment to a radically different environment. Culturally, racially, linguistically, Mexican immigrants are sharply set apart from the general population. Instead of assisting in a process of gradual acculturation, we have abandoned the people to chance and circumstance. And thereby we have permitted the extension to them, as a group, of a caste-system which had its origins in a semi-feudal slave economy and which has never been obliterated in the United States. In it they remain to this day.

It is interesting to note that Mr. Galarza makes almost the same suggestion for a proper administrative approach to the problem of Mexican immigration that Dr. Bruno Lasker made, at an earlier date, in reference to Filipino immigration. "I want to suggest," said Mr. Galarza, speaking on behalf of the Pan-American Union to the members of the Tolan Committee, "that the time has come for the creation of a joint international agency, composed of representatives of the United States and Mexico, to develop and carry out a long-term program of resettlement, rehabilitation, and regulation of migration between the two republics. This program would be based upon the normal needs of agriculture north of the border, the further development of the land program of Mexico, the utilization of Mexican land resources, with possible United States capital or a joint international fund, and the technical knowledge and skill of citizens of both Mexico and the United States who understand this problem from every angle."

The whole problem of Mexican immigration, about which so much was said and written and so little done between 1920 and 1930, has once again become a lively issue. As our manpower crisis deepens, it is altogether probable that we may be forced, once again, to relax the border regulations and to permit the large-scale importation of thousands of Mexican workers. We are already in the process of admitting 3,000 Mexicans for agricultural employment; and thousands more will probably be imported if the war continues. All the more reason, therefore, to concern ourselves with the million or more Mexican immigrants now in the United States, and with the creation of a sound administrative approach to the entire situation.

III

In order to emphasize some of the special problems that have arisen in connection with Mexican immigration, it might be well to examine a few typical situations. There are, for example, probably upwards of 75,000 Mexican immigrants who today are marooned, so to speak, in urban industrial centers. The Mexican immigrant never secured a strong foothold in American industry, largely by reason of the fact that in point of time he arrived on the scene late—in Chicago and Detroit, for instance, even later than the Negro migrant from the Deep South. Despite this fact, however, there are sizable Mexican colonies in such communities as Chicago, Detroit, Flint, Gary, and Bethlehem. In these urban areas, the Mexican immigrant is at a distinct disadvantage, even by comparison with the American Negro. He has had slight industrial experience and finds almost insuperable obstacles in the way of adjustment to this particular type of environment. Isolated from large centers of Mexican population, what remains of his traditional culture rapidly disintegrates and he presents a

THE FORGOTTEN MEXICAN

serious problem of personal and group disorganization.

Much the same situation exists in the urban communities in the Southwest from which Mexican workers are recruited for employment in agriculture. 100,000 or more Mexicans reside in San Antonio for at least a portion of the year. They constitute more than one-third of the total population of the city; some have placed the estimate as high as sixty-five per cent. While they have lived in San Antonio for years, even for generations, they have not achieved any deep-rooted social solidarity such as that which prevails in the Spanish-speaking settlements in New Mexico. The San Antonio Mexicans are, for the most part, rootless, semi-urbanized workers. That they constitute the social problem of San Antonio has long been acknowledged: approximately 56 per cent of the dwellers in sub-standard housing are Mexicans; over 55 per cent of all juvenile arrests in 1938 were of Mexican children; the city's high death rates for infant mortality and tuberculosis are primarily attributable to the high rates among the resident Mexican population (72 per cent of all tuberculosis deaths in San Antonio are among Mexicans). The Mexican infant mortality rate, 120 per 1,000 live births, is one of the highest in the nation. Almost nine-tenths of the city's 14,162 illiterates are Mexicans, the proportion of illiteracy for the group being 15.7 per cent. Over 3,000 Mexican children of school age have never entered the public schools of San Antonio. The percentage of Mexican youngsters graduating from high school is extremely small; the number who enter college is negligible. Accompanying this general situation is, as might be expected, a serious problem of social discrimination which belies the fundamental concepts of the Good Neighbor policy. "The Mexicans object to the use of the term 'white' in such a way as to exclude Mexicans,"

write Selden C. Menefee and Orin C. Cassmore in *The Pecan Shellers of San Antonio*. "They prefer to call whites of European extraction 'Anglo-Americans' or 'Anglos.' The Mexicans are conscious of such Spanish blood as they may have, and are not ashamed of their predominantly Indian blood. They jealously guard against any move that would set them apart from the self-styled 'white race.' The Mexican is nevertheless segregated from the rest of the community almost as effectively as the Negro. He is not kept apart from the Anglo-Americans in lavatories, waiting rooms, and public vehicles by law as is the Negro, but his poverty and low wages segregate him in the poorest sections of the city, in the day coaches of the railroads, in the balconies of the less pretentious theaters, and in the cheapest restaurants. These circumstances tend to perpetuate the social handicaps under which the Mexicans are forced to live." In measuring the seriousness of such a problem, it should be kept in mind that, whereas Mexicans constitute a large minority in San Antonio today, at their present rate of increase they will soon become a majority.

The present war has only served to bring to the surface tensions and pressures which have long been repressed within the group. Since the Mexican is the newest of the large immigrant groups (the fourth largest in the United States), a large second generation born of parents of Mexican nationality is only now coming to maturity. Unlike their parents, this generation knows nothing of Mexico. They have been born, reared, and educated (after a fashion) in this country. But they come from Spanish-speaking homes, they live in Mexican shack-town slums, and, as a group, they are violently maladjusted. As youngsters they have been denied many educational and recreational facilities, while at the same time their

COMMON GROUND

appetite for the excitements of American life has been inordinately stimulated. The traditional restraints of family life and culture have become disorganized and chaotic, while the Church has ceased to be a dominant influence in their lives. Social discrimination has also served to make them extremely race conscious. In a sense, therefore, this second-generation group presents the real problem so far as the Mexican immigrants are concerned.

Just how acute the problem actually is may be illustrated by reference to the situation in Los Angeles County. Some 219,000 Mexicans reside in the County of Los Angeles, of whom 36,410 are between the ages of 6 and 17. From grammar school days on, these Mexican youngsters have formed "gangs" and have indulged in their share of petty crime. There are Mexican districts in Los Angeles in which it is possible to find a case of juvenile delinquency in almost every family living in the neighborhood. With the loosening of traditional restraints occasioned by the war, these *pachuco* gangs have engaged in open internecine warfare.

In the first week of August, 1942, two murders and a number of serious assaults resulted from inter-gang strife. In an effort to check further outbreaks, the police, in one master raid, arrested over 300 Mexican youngsters. "The biggest roundup since prohibition days," commented the Los Angeles Times. Evidencing no understanding whatever of the background of the problem, police officials, juvenile probation officers, and even the juvenile court judges announced a highly repressive campaign in which the "kid gloves" were off. This terroristic campaign spread rapidly through the County and had echoes in most of the citrus belt Mexican communities and even in San Diego. In the course of the investigation, police officials discovered that Mexican gangs were well organized; each had its own uniform—

black shirts or green; and that in the background of the whole movement were elements of conscious political motivation. At the very moment when Vice-President Wallace and a representative of President Camacho were exchanging Good Neighbor greetings on the steps of the State Building in Los Angeles, the local press was featuring stories of "Mexican Gang Warfare." Shortly afterward, it was reported that the United States monitoring service had recorded "a deluge of broadcasts from Germany to Latin America exploiting the predicament in which Mexicans in Los Angeles find themselves." In view of existing conditions, it was positively embarrassing to hear Vice-President Wallace state, as he did in Los Angeles on September 16th, 1942, that "California had become a fusion ground for the two cultures of the Americas." For the essence of the problem in California is that no such fusion has taken place.

In all these situations—in Chicago, San Antonio, Los Angeles—the problem is not merely that of bad housing, inadequate educational and recreational facilities, and a serious public health condition. Nor is it merely a question of restricted employment opportunities and social discrimination. These are, in large part, but symptoms of cultural maladjustment. By concentrating upon unrelated aspects of the problem, we are somewhat in the position of not being able to see the forest for the trees. What the Mexican problem involves is long-standing cultural conflict rather than individual maladjustment. That this is the heart of the problem becomes abundantly clear when the old Spanish-speaking settlements in the United States are examined. In the areas where these settlements are located, no social discrimination exists and employment opportunities are not monopolized by the so-called "white" Americans; yet the evidence of cultural maladjustment and its

resulting social problems is overwhelmingly apparent.

IV

It comes as something of a shock to most Americans to realize that New Mexico is predominantly a Spanish-speaking state. With a population of 531,818 in 1940, some 221,740 New Mexicans listed Spanish as their mother tongue. Both Spanish and English are official languages in the state. In each of 15 out of 31 counties, Hispanos comprise 50 per cent or more of the population and these 15 counties have almost three-fifths of the entire population. In each of seven counties, the Spanish-speaking people constitute more than 80 per cent of the population. These New Mexico Hispanos are not recent immigrants; 90 per cent or more are descendants of the early Spanish colonists.

For the most part, the Hispanos are concentrated today as yesterday in the Rio Grande Valley and along the numerous tributaries of the river. Here is, perhaps, the oldest agricultural settlement in America; the Pueblo Indians have practiced agriculture in the valley for over a thousand years. The initial conquest of New Mexico began, of course, with Coronado's exploration of the Rio Grande in 1540. The establishment of Spanish colonies in the valley dates from 1598. The early colonists brought with them a highly integrated pattern of social life, built largely around the Church and the family. As New Mexico was virtually isolated from the rest of the world and from its main currents, events, and developments from 1540 to 1846, these patterns of social life became firmly imbedded in the region, and the people themselves became in time, as they remain today, a homogeneous, genetic aggregation.

Following the War of 1846, the United States acquired, in addition to a vast domain, a sizable alien population who over-

night became citizens of this country, at least in name. At the time of the annexation of New Mexico, the population of the state was approximately 61,547 and, for the most part, consisted of the descendants of the original Spanish colonists. Recognizing that these people constituted a distinct ethnic group, with their own language, culture, economy, and law, just how did we go about the business of incorporating them as a people into the main current of American life and culture? Just what methods were used to adjust this primitive society to the American society of the time? The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848) carefully defined borders and boundaries; it stipulated a price to be paid for the territories annexed; but it contained only vague and general provisions for the individual rights of the peoples inhabiting these lands, and no provisions whatever for the protection of the society of which they were a part. It was blandly assumed that somehow, by chance or otherwise, the social reality would adjust to the juridical reality established by the treaty.

We did not even bother to organize a territorial government in New Mexico until 1851; and the state was not admitted to the Union until 1912. Prior to 1890, there was virtually no public school system in the state. Even after a school system was established, it remained for years utterly inadequate both from the standpoint of organization and of techniques. As late as 1903, more than half the school population was not in attendance in the existing schools. Over 24 per cent of the native white males of voting age were illiterate in 1900; and, according to the Census of 1940, there are 26,488 residents of the state, 25 years of age or older, who have not completed one year of school. In making belated land grants for educational purposes, Congress never bothered to appraise its responsibilities to the native

COMMON GROUND

people of the region. "It failed to take note of the fact," writes Dr. George Sanchez in his remarkable book, *Forgotten People: A Study of New Mexicans*, "that these people were, in effect, subject peoples of a culture and of a way of life radically different from that into which they were suddenly and unwittingly thrust by a treaty. The government also failed to appreciate the fact that the territory lacked the economic resources, the leadership, and the administrative devices necessary to launch an effective program of cultural rehabilitation." As a consequence, the Hispanos were utterly unprepared to meet the problems of social change which arose both before and after statehood was acquired. Nor are they much better prepared today, for, as Dr. Sanchez has said, "they breathe their own cultural inadequacy. They are unprepared to act in their new environment—unprepared because of centuries of isolation. They have no tradition of competition, of education, or of western civilization beyond the sixteenth century."

Despite the fact that the Hispanos constitute a numerical majority in New Mexico and that they are all citizens, the great masses of their people remain a severely handicapped social and economic group. Although they clearly hold the balance of political power in New Mexico and are actively interested in politics, their cultural inadequacy frustrates an effective use of this power. Wherever the highest proportions of Spanish-speaking people reside in New Mexico, you will find the highest illiteracy rates, the worst public health conditions, the worst housing, the lowest income levels, and the most poverty.

In summarizing the responsibility for this sorry state of affairs, Dr. Sanchez writes: "the generally inferior status held by the native New Mexican today is, in large measure, a result of the failure of

the United States to recognize the special character of the social responsibility it assumed when it brought these people forcibly into the American society. Granting them technical citizenship did not discharge that responsibility." It was childishly naive to expect that adjustment between two societies and cultures so fundamentally different would result automatically after annexation.

Far from recognizing this special character of the problem (which would have indicated at once the necessity for a specialized approach), we have consistently pretended no such problem existed. No organized or co-ordinated effort was ever made to compile and to assemble the available information which would clearly have indicated its character. Further, from the point of view of educational policy, no recognition has ever been made of the problem. Most immigrant groups in America are distant from the countries in which the culture of their race and language flourished. But the Spanish American of New Mexico is merely an extension of the great Spanish American family of the American continent. Spanish has always been spoken in the state; annexation in no wise changed the situation. But it has only been of recent years that serious consideration has been given to the possibility of bi-lingual instruction, particularly to make use of Spanish as an initial instrument to retain childhood experiences and to acquire transferable concepts. The Spanish-speaking child comes to the public schools without a word of English and without "the environmental experience upon which school life is based." As Dr. Sanchez states, "the use of standard curricula, books, and materials among these children is a ridiculous gesture." Bi-lingual instruction does not signify neglect of English; on the contrary, it would establish the basis upon which a real and workable knowledge of Eng-

lish might be predicated. Through Spanish, also, government programs in public health and in agriculture could be brought home to the people in the most immediate and practical way.

When New Mexico was annexed, we made the gratuitous assumption that its economic resources would enable the people to attain standards of living such as prevailed elsewhere in the United States. But we made no such assumption in the case of the American Indian, the Filipino, or the Puerto Rican, who also were subject peoples. Recognizing his cultural disabilities, we threw special safeguards around the American Indian. But no one protected the Hispano in his property rights or set up special schools for his guidance or gave special attention to his peculiar agricultural problems. On the contrary, as Dr. Sanchez has observed, "instead of safeguarding him in his land and water rights, government has inadvertently deprived him of those rights through taxation, through the expansion of Indian lands, and by placing him at the mercy of unrestricted economic competition."

After the advent of the New Deal, general economic rehabilitation measures were attempted in New Mexico, but again without any effort being made to understand the special character of the problems involved, particularly their cultural aspect. Policies suitable for agricultural rehabilitation in Iowa were applied in the Tewa Basin of New Mexico, where 85 per cent of the farming is subsistence, non-commercial agriculture. Every loan was individually conceived, every rehabilitation plan was an individual plan; every farmer was regarded as distinct and so was his neighbor; each failure was a special case and likewise each success. No effort was made to understand that it was a collective adjustment which the economy of the region required and that it was the entire economy which was deficient. To make

loans repayable with interest to these subsistence farmers was economic suicide. Naturally such rehabilitation measures failed as they were destined to fail from the outset.

American economic and cultural penetration of New Mexico had begun prior to 1846; in fact, the beginnings of the move to incorporate New Mexico into a continental economy may be traced to the developing Santa Fe trade of the 1820s. Annexation therefore merely accelerated a process already well under way by 1846. In the conflict that subsequently ensued, and which still continues, no question is involved of the inferiority of one culture by comparison with the other. Technically the Anglo culture may have been more efficient (a debatable point); socially the Hispano culture was probably superior. Hispanos might, in fact, have competed with Anglos successfully, if annexation had not also involved an enormous shift of power. This shift may be variously illustrated. In 1827, some 240,000 sheep were counted in New Mexico; in 1860, 830,000; in 1880, 4,000,000. This growth merely represents the increasingly important role played by large-scale Anglo enterprise in New Mexico. With the development of large commercial cattle and sheep operations, huge investments of capital from "the States" and even from foreign countries were made in New Mexico. Underlying the entire shift in power, and basic to the whole problem, was the often corrupt and dishonest manipulation of Spanish land grants by an unholy alliance of Anglo lawyers and power-politicians. "Cultural inadequacy," therefore, does not tell the whole story.

V

Along the Rio Grande River in New Mexico, and its numerous tributaries, are located some of the most fascinating and fabulous villages in America. In such

COMMON GROUND

places as Nambe, Chimayo (founded in 1692), Cundiyo, Cordova, and Truchas, one can visit today communities which have remained almost wholly unaffected by world developments during the last two hundred years. Inhabited by the descendants of the original Spanish colonists, these villagers still speak the Spanish of the time of Cervantes. To visit them is not only to form an intense admiration for the people themselves, but to become deeply impressed with the integrity of their social life and of their culture.

Many of these villages are the outgrowth of community land grants made at the time of the Spanish conquest; some grants are, in fact, still administered by elected trustees on behalf of the entire community. In the making of these grants, there was much overlapping, and boundaries were not clearly defined. But the people themselves never regarded titles as important; they have always had a sense of the value of use and occupancy, but never a sense of the value of individual ownership. Isolated farm houses are rare in New Mexico; the pattern is everywhere—in the Spanish-speaking areas—that of the village or semi-communal type of agriculture. There is the plaza, from which the four principal streets lead outward; and then the building lots, or solares, for the settlers' homes. Around the villages are the *zuertes*, or agricultural plots, on which the people raise their own corn, wheat, beans, squash, and fruit. Beyond the small irrigated plots is (or rather was) the *ejido*, or town common, used for grazing stock and as a source of fuel and building wood; and beyond the *ejido* is the *dehesa* or community pasture. During both the Spanish and Mexican period, no taxes were levied on land, taxes being laid only on the products of the land and being payable in kind. In these villages a distinctly self-sufficient non-commercial agriculture was practiced. Grains were

milled in the community-owned or private mills; cloth was woven from wool and cotton in the home; footwear was manufactured by village craftsmen, as were also tools, cooking utensils, and other household goods. Trade was limited and money was virtually unknown. Lost in time and in space, these villages acquired the character of a distinct racial and cultural society. While there was some intermarriage with Indians at an early date, there has been virtually none within the memory of the oldest living inhabitants.

The degree of social compactness which still prevails in these villages is amazing. The hold of village, family, and Church is still strong. The village of Cundiyo, with a population of 122 people, is entirely made up of persons with the surname of Vigil. Village and family are, in many instances, almost synonymous terms. So close are family ties, in fact, that to remove or to resettle one family might conceivably interfere with or even threaten the existence of the social structure of a particular village. Because of the old established social controls that still prevail, thievery and plundering are almost unknown; and crime of any sort is most exceptional. Custom, rather than law, rules their lives. So strong is the sense of community among these people that individuals are identified as much by the community in which they live as by family name.

Most of these villages are still isolated; many are extremely difficult to find and can only be reached by barely passable roads. There are few automobiles, scarcely any radios, and no telephones. Studies show that 85 per cent of the villagers receive no outside mail. An Anglo is seldom seen. Agricultural machinery, as such, is virtually non-existent; most of the available implements are handmade. Old water-driven stone mills, incredibly ancient and crude, are still in use. Here may

THE FORGOTTEN MEXICAN

be found some of the most interesting specimens of church architecture in America. Some of the villages themselves are indescribably picturesque and lovely. The little village of Truchas, at 8,000 feet elevation, perched on the edge of a 500-foot canyon wall, presents one of the most fantastic sights in America. That such a village actually exists in America is essentially incredible.

With the advent of United States sovereignty and the ensuing influx of an Anglo population, intense pressures were brought to bear upon the Spanish-speaking settlements. New concepts and new values, difficult enough in themselves to grasp, were injected into the villages and were beclouded, as Allen Harper has observed, by the difference in language. With American sovereignty there came new laws, a new land system, and a money tax. "Large sheep and cattle enterprises developed and commercial trading was introduced," writes Mr. Harper. "There came also the Anglos, seeking more than a mere subsistence livelihood. There came the dry farmers. There came the homesteaders who settled out on the range near desirable water holes, to whom the highway was the connecting link with store, church and school, instead of the village." There developed the usual sharp frontier practices, the same unsavory trafficking in land grants that occurred in Texas and California, and the same shady real estate deals and manipulations. Many of the original land grants were not validated; others were sold for taxes.

In area after area in New Mexico, the Hispanos lost their once vast holdings. The mesa lands were taken up by homesteaders and large sheep and cattle concerns; the forests passed into the hands of American investors and were soon despoiled; the community grazing and pasture lands drifted out of Hispano use and control. For a century, now, there has

been a continuous sharpening of the competition between commercial and non-commercial users of the resources of the region. The Hispano has been driven inward upon his limited village resources. He has lost virtually everything except the village lot itself and a small plot of irrigated land. This he holds onto with amazing tenacity, refusing to sell it to the Anglo or to mortgage it. Having no system of primogeniture, village holdings have, through inheritance, become minutely divided and subdivided. The average holding per family today is between three and four acres. Usually the lands are divided into narrow strips running at right angles to the irrigation ditch or canal. As the Hispano has been driven inward upon the village itself, the pressure of population upon resources has intensified. The average number of persons per square mile in New Mexico in 1930 was 3.5, but in the irrigated areas this density reaches 500 persons per square mile.

For many years the villagers managed to survive in the face of intense competition for land by seeking employment outside the area. Prior to 1930, it was estimated that as many as 10,000 Hispanos (usually one person in every family) sought outside seasonal employment: in sugar beets and potatoes, in the mines and on the railroads, in the sheep camps of Colorado and Utah, Wyoming and Montana. But estimated seasonal earnings for the entire group dropped from around \$2,000,000 in 1930 to less than \$350,000 in 1937, while the number of migratory workers fell from 10,000 to around 2,000. With no outside employment available, the number of persons residing in the villages increased and, during the depression, there was a decided movement of population back to the villages. In most of them today there are not enough available resources to care for more than one-fourth the present residents. When efforts have

COMMON GROUND

been made to expand the land base, as by the creation of the Rio Grande Conservancy District in 1927, the resultant increase in taxes and assessments forced a majority of the small land owners and villagers to part with title to their tiny holdings and to join the ranks of the landless. The Rio Grande Conservancy District added 100,000 acres of cultivable land; but it was a positive curse to the villagers, for here was a type of collectively imposed debt which they could not escape.

The pressure of population upon resources began even to be reflected in the diet of the Hispano. In the circumstances in which he found himself, the planting of beans and grain offered two distinct and not inconsiderable advantages: such crops could be consumed alike by animals and by human beings and they were easily grown and readily stored. But the brilliant research of Dr. Michel Pijoan has shown what disastrous effects this dependence upon a diet high in carbohydrates has had upon the Hispano. In villages studied by Dr. Pijoan, the incidence of rickets in the first decade of life was found to run as high as 84 per cent; only about 60 per cent of the children reached adult life. To keep these undernourished children in school is, according to Dr. Pijoan, a kind of cruelty. They lack the energy to learn. Most of the villages, of course, have no hospitals nor any readily available medical service.

Why, under these circumstances, do the villagers refuse to migrate? Why, it will be asked, do they stay in such poverty-ridden areas? Many of the people freely admit they would be much better off were they to migrate. But such has been the social solidarity in these villages that, in the face of the most intense competition, they could and did resist change for years. External pressures seem to have had the effect of increasing rather than decreasing this social cohesiveness. But

their resources are now so low that most of the villagers realize change is imminent. And this change they fear, since, to many, it means the abandonment of cherished values and customs which have given meaning, purpose, and dignity to their lives.

Only within the last ten years are there indications that this Hispano culture-pattern, this remarkable social solidarity, is really in process of change, perhaps of disintegration. In the past, geographical isolation resulted from the absence of open-country population around the Hispano villages; cultural isolation resulted, in part, from the language barrier. Gradually both types of isolation have been broken down, and a degree of inter-group cultural exchange has developed. There is also evidence that family mores and the influence of the Church—once strong factors in group solidarity—have become less effective, particularly insofar as the younger people are concerned. New patterns might be readily superimposed on the existing culture if this culture were used as the basis upon which to proceed. But haphazard weakening of the existing culture, at different levels, tends to destroy its capacity for adjustment. So violent have been the social changes which have occurred of recent years that, in the opinion of Dr. Sigurd Johansen, the mechanisms do not seem to exist in the culture of the Spanish American people by which an adjustment might be made. "New forces," he writes, "must be brought into play if the problems of these people are to be solved."

VI

Faced with this situation there are, of course, many Americans who will say that the threatened liquidation of the Spanish American and his culture was predestined from the outset; that no non-competitive economy can possibly sur-

vive in the midst of our competitive American economy; that the sooner these anachronistic islands, these isolated and compact communities disappear, the better for all concerned. But such a view is not only partial; it is amazingly shortsighted. As a matter of fact, it is of the utmost importance that the essentials of this culture and this way of life be preserved. Preservation naturally implies adaptation and change and the introduction of superior techniques; but all this can be accomplished while preserving the enduring values which adhere in these communities. That there are such values is self-evident; otherwise these communities would have gone to pieces fifty years ago. The best proof is to know the people themselves, for to know them, even to see them, is to form a great admiration for their sense of personal dignity, their charm of manner, and the social values they have kept intact. There are elements in their agriculture which we can study with great profit. For with the possible exception of the rapidly disappearing Mormon villages, the Hispano villages represent the last vestiges of a semi-communal form of agriculture in America. Here most of the tools and implements, primitive as they may be, are owned, used, and shared in common. Here the villagers live and work together as a compact social group, planting, cultivating, irrigating, and harvesting their crops together. These villages should be preserved, not as antique representations of a forgotten way of life, but as a pattern of rural living which has much to commend itself to us at the present time. The almost complete absence of class distinctions should also be noted.

Today life is stagnant in the villages and most of the people are sustained by one form or another of public relief and assistance. But if we were to give serious consideration to the task of assisting in

the total readjustment of the entire area and economy—as a working and functioning whole, its people and their culture—to our technology, culture, and economy, then these villages might take a new lease on life; conceivably they might endure for another three hundred years. But this can only be done if we realize the special character of the problem itself and if we devise the special administrative techniques to assist in such a process of creative adjustment, involving as it does the revitalizing of the existing culture and economy.

New Mexico, like Hawaii, has much to teach the entire nation on the score of racial acceptance. Indians, Hispanos, and Anglos have lived side by side in the Rio Grande Valley for years, and so far as social relations are concerned, acceptance prevails. Because of the large resident Hispano population, social discrimination has never been tolerated. Both Indians and Mexicans (including native-born Hispanos) have free and equal access to public institutions, hotels, barber shops, and places of amusement—a situation totally at variance with, say, Texas and California practice where the rankest social discrimination prevails. This favorable social milieu is, indeed, a national asset of inestimable value, if we would only appreciate its true significance. For New Mexico, which is a predominantly Spanish state, is really the key to the problem of permanently improving Latin American relations and in bringing about a real *rapprochement* between the two cultures of the Western Hemisphere.

“Internationally, New Mexico is destined to be the bridge between the two Americas,” writes Dr. Joaquin Ortega of the University of New Mexico. “This state is the shortest route to Mexican good will. To work in close harmony with Mexico and heal the open sore created in the Pan-American body by the distressing

COMMON GROUND

situation of Mexican citizens and Mexican descendants in the midst of our vaunted democracy, is more important now than ever, for Mexico is a key country in our defense, and Mexico exerts a profound intellectual influence in Latin America, particularly so in the Caribbean region. The job is at the same time one of intrinsic social justice and of sound international politics."

This point of view has found eloquent political articulation by Senator Dennis Chavez of New Mexico, himself an Hispano. In a statement issued on June 13, 1942, Senator Chavez called upon the nation to put a stop to racial intolerance and pointed out that the time to do so is now most opportune. "Our nation," he said, "is now involved in a tremendous war for existence and in this titanic struggle most of the Latin American nations are allied with us. We are all brothers in the fight for the four freedoms. How, therefore, can equality of race and equality of opportunity be denied us within the United States?"

Proof of the valor and heroism of the Hispano needs no emphasis. German radio programs directed against the United States to Latin American listeners have no effect whatever in New Mexico. In 1898 we fought a war with Spain, and the Hispanos of New Mexico—with the memories of the War of 1846 still vivid in their minds—actively supported the United States against their mother country. In this war, the 200th Coast Artillery and the 515th Coast Artillery, composed largely of men from New Mexico, covered the retreat of General MacArthur's army from Manila to Bataan, and those who survived are today in Japanese prison camps.

The loyalty of these Spanish American villagers in New Mexico begs description. In a remote and isolated spot in

the northern part of the state, in 1942, I saw an old man who spoke not a word of English, walking from village to village, selling defense bonds. I had had occasion, moreover, to learn something about the poverty that exists in these same villages. But the old Hispano told me he had no trouble selling defense bonds and stamps. "They all buy some," he said.

Allen Harper thoughtfully jotted down the notes of a conversation he had with a young Spanish American hitch-hiking in New Mexico. "I am going to my village in Taos County," he said, "to say good-bye. I am the last of my family—my mother and my father are dead. My brother—I am very glad now—they thought he got killed out there some place; but now the War Department has sent me a telegram saying that's not so—he's alive. I think I'm going out there, too, just where my brother is. Then we can fight together. We got to fight—we got to win this war—maybe we die for liberty—maybe not—but we got to fight—we got to win." This boy epitomized the spirit of the Spanish Americans of New Mexico. "Their loyalty springs," writes Mr. Harper, "not from benefits bestowed by United States citizenship, but from the promise inherent in our democracy and our institutions. They have faith in that promise, in spite of almost a century of being 'forgotten.' Now is the time to implement promise with realization."

*This is a condensation of a chapter in Carey McWilliams' new volume, *Brothers Under the Skin*, scheduled for April publication by Little, Brown. Dealing with the "color" of America, Mr. McWilliams discusses also the Filipino, the Chinese, the Japanese, the Negro, and other groups, in an attempt to correlate the problems involved and to chart a method of approach to their solution.*

DUTCH GAP

WILLIAM STROVINK

WE WERE a loose league of nations in Dutch Gap, and it was only natural that our varied extractions should sometimes cause misunderstanding. That was before the League of Nations was born at Geneva to repeat in adult form some of our incompatibilities.

I have often wished that my father had bought a small farm in New Hampshire as did my Uncle Kay. Uncle Kay's family were the only "foreigners" in Lyndham. He wanted to be "assimilated" quickly, and he worked assiduously to that end. Lyndham had but a single church, Methodist, whereupon Uncle Kay promptly became a Methodist and attended church regularly. One Sabbath he was requested to say a prayer in his native Lithuanian. He obliged, with interest. Uncle Kay was a linguist; he prayed in Lithuanian, Latvian, Polish, and Russian. Presumably only his family knew when he switched to each tongue. To the Yankee congregation, the prayer was uniformly unintelligible and long-winded. Yet no child of school age in Dutch Gap but would have sensed the transitions. Indeed, most of us could distinguish between the gutturals of Klier's Bavarian and Schmidt's Prussian.

Still, we kids got along well enough, everything considered. We'd won eight of ten baseball games the summer of 1914. Hans—we pronounced it "Huntz"—Schmidt played short next to Froggie Ouellette at third. We had an Italian, Woppy Miranto, at first, and his brother Joe at second base. Dutch Klier—his folks

were really German—our star pitcher, worked nicely with Blab O'Reilly behind the plate. The outfield was a Slav preserve and well guarded, except when I substituted for one of them.

We practised on the bumpy field that paralleled Whiteside's laundry, a field that had once been a marsh moistened by the Wicket River. The city aldermen, pressed for a site for refuse, had the low land filled to the level of the boiler room of the laundry. In its second year the dump caught fire and smoldered ceaselessly despite frequent tussles of the fire department. Even after gravel and sand had capped the neighborhood eyesore, the dump fire oozed a wispy vapor of thin smoke and stench.

With a Yankee tolerance we kids didn't fully appreciate, Mr. Whiteside did not discourage our use of his field. He prudently screened the windows of his laundry and ignored us for the most part. Nor was his gesture a businessman's deference to his customers. The women of our neighborhood, though they too worked in the mills alongside their husbands, didn't send their clothes to a laundry.

During the summer school vacations we wore overalls of unfinished denim. The plain cotton aprons of the girls were likewise of cloth directly from the loom. Periodically, mill inspectors "canvassed" the neighborhood to keep the theft of unfinished cloth within reasonable bounds. I remember but one arrest. A Mrs. Marofsky—and childless, at that!

COMMON GROUND

—had two trunks full of varied fabrics she had smuggled out of the mill by wrapping yards of cloth about her, under the many folds of her petticoats. For us, the overalls and aprons were a uniform that partly hid our varied strains.

Toward dusk a window would slam open in one of the three or four deckers, and a voice would bellow, "*Geh' heim, Hans!*" or "*Jonai! Aik namei.*" Those of us who were yet to be called would caustically parrot each summons, so that in time we learned a dozen phrases in as many tongues.

Our parents almost always spoke to us in their native languages. They were conscious of their limitations in English, and they probably rationalized that it would not hamper their children to know another tongue. The result among us was an illiteracy in two languages. Still, the public school system in its mighty labors had an ally in an unwritten law dangerous to ignore. We would not tolerate "foreign" talk among us kids. Adults could indulge their preference when addressing their offspring, but said offspring dared not visit his detestable jargon on our collective ears. We even broke the Miranto brothers of the habit.

Conversely, our schooling in English produced a colorful bastardization of the language of our fathers. At home, we'd select a handier English word and tack on a foreign twist. The practice was general, for while we seldom understood the jabber of another's parents, we could usually guess the meaning of the son's reply.

We were quick to recognize and properly label a "foreign" characteristic. We resented the manner in which old man Klier constantly pruned his rose bush with drastic amputation of those stems nearest his fence. We would have pilfered the roses, of course, but we didn't like to be reminded of it. And we disagreed violent-

ly with the elder Miranto's choice of paint.

I remember Squash Manefsky appearing among us munching a huge slice of black bread covered with lard. Woppy Miranto, who was then new to our neighborhood, couldn't restrain disgust at this popular Polish snack. "Cripes! How can ya eat that? I'd puke!"

Squash, stung and indignant, swallowed his mouthful without gusto and shrieked rebuttal, "Yeah? What's your old man got hung up on the piazza? Hah? Hah? Dago cheese! What a stink! What a stink!!"

Still the heterogeneous cooking odors of Dutch Gap were not wholly inimical. It was the asocial housewife indeed, who did not enhance and extend her culinary repertoire.

As for the children—we residents of a halfway limbo betwixt Old and New World cultures—we found our truce in the leavening atmosphere of play. There was baseball, football, a mile hike to the indoor games of a Boys' Club; and there was the Wicket River to swim in.

The Wicket was of a liquid somewhat more dense in substance than mere water. Fish did not find it to their liking; we kids were less fastidious. Behind the illusory protection of the laundry barn we swam naked. Except during the spring freshets, the river was shallow; nevertheless, we dived from either bank, perfecting through pain a shallow scoop of a dive, a gingerly "ladling" of the surface.

We polyglots were figuratively of a like complexion during our swims and sometimes of the same color physically, too—emerging as we oftentimes did from the river with skins of green, pink, or navy blue, depending upon which of the concentrated dyes the dyehouse just above the swimming hole was spewing into the Wicket at the moment. Yet, beyond infancy, our mortality rate was low. I

DUTCH GAP

recall but three juvenile deaths. Whitey Olsen succumbed to a burst appendix. Sophie Serravitch's flimsy apron caught fire from a Fourth of July bonfire. Mr. Roakes, the laundry engineer, wrapped her in a horse blanket and threw her into the Wicket River. However, that was before medical science perfected treatment of shock.

And there was little Porky Stulla, who was an early automobile victim in a coasting accident. He was badly smashed by an ambulance—of all things. Joe Miranto and I paid our respects to Porky. We kneeled and said a prayer at his bier, while a professional wailer climbed and skidded a minor scale in a false vibrato. We were silent for two blocks after we'd left. The wailer had progressed to a trick of choking off her vocal siren on the down beat. Joe said, "She puts on a good act for her five bucks."

extravagant plans for the future. Once Huntz said, "I think maybe I'll go to Heidelberg University." He must have sensed our disbelief, for he hastened to add, "My old man's folks live near Heidelberg." He left us before we could say anything. We wouldn't have ridiculed Huntz in any event; he was merely voicing a rationalization all three of us felt. When Huntz was out of earshot, Froggy amended, "Heidelberg's all right for Germans. Me, I'm going to the Sorbonne, more'n likely. The Sorbonne is tops!"

But Huntz and Froggy didn't get beyond their sophomore year at high school. Neither did I. It didn't much matter to me, for there was no university in Lithuania I could go to. In fact, there was then no Lithuania.

Recently I went back to Dutch Gap as the chief air-raid warden of Ward 1.



When we parted at Tilford Street, he said almost to himself, "Sewed him up like a rag bag! Just like a damn rag bag!"

At fourteen, most of the boys entered the mills. For a time, Huntz Schmidt, Froggy Ouellette, and I were exceptions. Week ends, the working boys, important with spending money, visited Silver Lake Park. Huntz, Froggy, and I felt coldly excluded; we were high school Freshmen and did not have the means to go along. We would vent our suppressed envy in

I didn't go directly to Froggy Ouellette's home. He was the only one of the old gang that had stayed in Dutch Gap. He would make an ideal air-raid warden for the district. I knew he had married Mary Druskas, whose Polish mother had married a Lithuanian. Froggy and Mary had three children. That was six less than Mary's mother had had. The three Ouellette youngsters would be Americans twice removed, of French, Polish, and Lithuanian stock.

COMMON GROUND

I walked by number 23, Froggy's apartment. River Street now boasted macadam and paved sidewalks. The elms that once marked the street from the footwalks had yielded to the elm blight. I couldn't decide whether the smooth road and trim walks counterbalanced the loss of the elms, but the houses were an improvement. Hedges supplanted fences. Where Hoelzel's block once sprawled, three bungalows found room to stretch their gables. The laundry was still there, the lop-sided, bulging building corseted in a covering of imitation brick. The chimney of the dye house across the Wicket still exhaled soot, but the plant's vomit of dyes now colored a tier of filter beds. The Wicket ran clearer; I half expected to see fish jump. It was warm, but no boys swam in the river. I strolled along the bank toward our old ball field. Where home plate had been was a row of seesaws. Three tennis courts enclosed the outfield. There were kiddies' slide chutes and sand pits all over the infield. I wanted to shout to the playing children, "Do you know that your park was once a dump? First a swamp, then a dump, and now a park?" They would think me touched, perhaps. Certainly they couldn't be expected to understand the symbolism of a dump fire that had smoldered for so long, reducing a rubble to firm ash, purifying by fire a foundation, to make a solid that decidedly belied the miscellany of its origin.

A tall youth in shorts shouted, "Love, forty." Strange talk for Dutch Gap. He resembled Huntz Schmidt. That was absurd, for Huntz was the superintendent of a worsted mill in Rhode Island. I had called on him a month before on my way to New York. Despite the explicit direc-

tions of the mill watchman, I had had difficulty finding Huntz's office. The name on the office pane read, "H. H. Smith," not Schmidt. Huntz had referred to it casually, very casually early in our talk. "Just a phonetic translation, you know." I had understood. My own name had lost an entire syllable in a single Atlantic crossing.

Now outside Froggy's apartment I struggled to recall his baptismal name. When he opened the door he was little changed; he was sparser-haired, with a modest paunch. "Hello, Ray," I said. He knew me at once. "Squarehead! Good ole Squarehead!" A boy of ten raised startled brown eyes to the recipient of his father's odd greeting. I took Froggy's hand. I noticed and felt the callouses of his strong fingers. I'd heard he was an excellent machinist. Froggy's intelligence was largely contained in those deft fingers; he was an artist of production, an artisan of the machine age. But universities, notably the Sorbonne, catered to a different species.

"He looks like you," I said to Froggy, nodding toward the youngster reassuringly.

"He's the baby. You'll have to meet his big brother." There was strong pride unblemished by restraint in his familiar voice. "You must have read about him in the *Courier*? Triple threat half-back. He's got offers from three small colleges, but me and Mary figure it's Harvard or bust."

A free-lance writer, born in Lawrence, Massachusetts, of Lithuanian immigrant parentage, William Strovink now lives on the West Coast.

The drawing is by Kurt Werth

WHAT HAPPENED AT MANZANAR

A REPORT

WHEN military police marched into the Manzanar, California, Relocation Center on December 6 to quiet a disturbance among evacuees of Japanese ancestry, it was a relatively simple matter to label the disturbance a "pro-Axis demonstration" and let it go at that. Americans have not lost their love of the catchphrase or their aptitude for finding what seems to be a simple explanation for the most complex of situations. The further fact that the outbreak occurred on the eve of the first anniversary of Pearl Harbor was also regarded as something more than mere coincidence and accepted as proof per se that Manzanar was a hotbed of pro-Axis sentiment.

The facts in the case do not warrant such an assumption. There were other factors present in the situation which were much more important and far too complicated and involved to be dismissed by a simple catchphrase explanation. Officials of the War Relocation Authority have since made a careful investigation of the whole affair, and they are convinced that while manifestation of pro-Axis agitation was not entirely lacking, it was a minor factor, not a primary force, in the events leading up to the disturbance.

First of all, it is significant and worth noting that this disturbance at the oldest of the relocation centers was the first really serious outbreak of violence since 110,000 persons of Japanese ancestry were removed from their homes in strategic military areas along the West Coast and placed under guard in new, rough

communities called relocation centers. In considering the problems involved in that movement it is also important to remember that nearly two-thirds of those evacuated were American citizens by right of birth.

The incident which opened this turbulent chapter in Manzanar history occurred on the evening of December 5, when six masked men, all evacuees, entered the apartment of Fred Tayama and gave him a severe beating. Later that night, members of the center police force arrested Harry Ueno, popular kitchen worker and former labor organizer, named by Tayama as one of the men who had attacked him.

Ueno was taken to the Inyo county jail at Independence, about five miles from the center. This was in accord with WRA policy concerning the handling of felony cases.

Next morning, Ueno's co-workers in the mess-hall kitchen and friends in the block where he lived called a meeting to discuss the situation and consider ways in which they could protest his arrest since they felt it had been unjustified and that Ueno was innocent. It was decided to call a larger meeting that afternoon.

A crowd of about 2,000 people turned out for this general mass meeting held in one of the open spaces on the center grounds. A public-address system was set up and speakers brought accusations against Tayama of having been an informer, violently denounced the arrest of

COMMON GROUND

Ueno, and urged the crowd to demand his release from the Independence jail. A committee of five was chosen, and, headed by this committee, the crowd marched off to the Administration Building to present its demands. Ralph P. Merritt, WRA project director, refused to meet with the committee unless the crowd would first agree to disperse. More speeches followed, many of them in Japanese and violently attacking the administration and certain members of the project staff. After about three-quarters of an hour of this, with the crowd becoming more unruly and giving no indication that it intended to disperse, Merritt discussed the situation with the captain of the military police and agreed to meet with the committee.

An agreement was reached that Ueno would be brought back to the center jail on a pledge by the committee, representing the crowd, that there would be no attempt made later to free him, that there would be no further mass meetings held with respect to his arrest, and that the committee would help to find Tayama's assailants. The committee agreed to these conditions, and a spokesman addressed the crowd in Japanese, advising it to disperse, and supposedly explaining the conditions under which Ueno would be brought back and to which the committee had agreed. It was learned later that the speaker referred to the negotiations as a victory for the evacuees, omitting the conditions of the agreement, and that he instructed the crowd to assemble again at six o'clock that evening.

After the crowd had dispersed, Ueno was brought back to the center jail. But at dusk that evening the crowd began assembling again, cheering and shouting and milling about, listening to more inflammatory speeches by its leaders. It then separated into two groups, one of which descended on the hospital with a demand that Fred Tayama, the man who had been

beaten, be turned over to them. Tayama had been hidden, and the representatives of the crowd were unable to find him.

Thus thwarted, this part of the crowd joined the second group which had gone to the police station to demand the unconditional release of Ueno. It was estimated that the total group massed in front of the station numbered between 2,000 and 3,000 persons. Threats were made against evacuee policemen on duty at the station, and spokesmen said that unless Ueno was released the mob would take matters into its own hands.

Ralph Merritt, director of the center, realizing that the evacuees had broken their promise concerning mass meetings and further efforts to obtain Ueno's release, and that the evacuee police force was powerless to handle the mob, called in the military police and asked the captain in command to take charge of the situation. The company of military police deployed in front of the station. The commanding officer talked with leaders of the crowd at considerable length, and finally addressed the crowd as a whole, ordering them to disperse. The crowd remained, even though it was informed that tear gas would be used. Upon orders, the soldiers threw tear gas bombs. At almost the same moment, some evacuees released the brake on an automobile and started it rolling down grade toward the police station, where it hit the corner of the building and careened off. One of the lieutenants, being unable to see in the darkness that the car was driverless, fired at the tires with a sub-machine gun. Concurrently, the crowd scattered in all directions to escape the tear gas, and some of those in the front of the crowd moved in the direction of the soldiers. The latter, armed with shotguns, apparently thought they were being rushed by the crowd and three shots were fired. The crowd dispersed immediately, leaving an 18-year-

WHAT HAPPENED AT MANZANAR

old boy dead, and a 21-year-old youth mortally wounded. Eight others were injured by the shots and one broken leg was suffered, apparently as a result of crushing by the crowd.

During the days that followed, a pall hung over Manzanar. Only the essential work activities, operation of the mess halls, the hospital, fuel delivery, etc., were carried on. Schools were closed. All the evacuees who appeared out of doors wore black arm bands, ostensibly in mourning for James Ito, the young boy who was killed.

The military police took over the responsibility of guarding the area of the center in which the administrative buildings and warehouses were located and retained this responsibility until January 1, when they withdrew. Martial law was not declared, however, and the WRA staff retained administrative supervision of the center.

After a week, the evacuees were permitted to choose representatives, and the 108 chosen from the various blocks then selected a committee to negotiate with the administration for a return to normal conditions. Terms of agreement were not easily arrived at, however, and no concessions on fundamentals were made by Director Merritt.

Meanwhile, the administrative staff was gathering evidence on trouble makers and agitators. Over a period of a few days, 22 men were arrested and lodged in jail outside the center. In the same period, some 65 persons who had been most active in collaborating with the WRA administration, and who had been threatened with physical violence by the agitators, sought protection and were moved temporarily to another location outside Manzanar. With the removal of extremists of both factions, tension gradually subsided, and negotiations between the evacuee com-

mittee and the administrative staff progressed slowly but surely toward an agreement.

In the negotiations, the committee of spokesmen aired the underlying causes of discontent: discrimination against Issei (aliens) in favor of the younger, less experienced Nisei (American citizens) in administrative positions and also in the community government; pre-evacuation quarrels and factional disputes; delays in payment of wages and of clothing allowances; variations in quality of food between mess halls; the pro-administration and pro-government policy of the center newspaper; the separation of many families from their breadwinner, held in internment camps; trial of evacuees by civil courts outside the relocation center; uncertainty about the future in this country; financial loss in disposing of property at the time of evacuation; an unfriendly press outside the relocation centers.

The combination of these influences had made the entire community extremely volatile, ready to explode if a spark touched it off. The spark was provided by the arrest of Ueno, who was popular with most elements of the community, on charges of beating Tayama, who was unpopular because of the suspicion that he was an informer.

The presence of a pro-Japanese element in the center was indicated before the disturbance, but individuals who were taking part in any pro-Japanese agitation succeeded in keeping their identities well concealed. Little by little, however, their activities came to light. Over a period of days after the disturbance of December 6, twenty-two arrests were made. Two of the men later were released because of mistaken identity, four others because of insufficient evidence. The remaining 16 were taken to an isolation center established in a former CCC camp, near Moab, Utah. Some will be held there indefi-

COMMON GROUND

nately; others will be turned over to the Department of Justice or to the Army for internment for the duration of the war.

The 65 who were moved for their own protection to another location have been granted indefinite leave from the relocation center, and most of them are now placed in private employment.

Thus, the War Relocation Authority has taken the first tentative steps toward segregation of the population in its ten relocation centers. Cases of individuals who are trouble makers or who are suspected of pro-Axis agitation are being reviewed, and it is probable that others will join the first group of residents in the isolation center. Formal segregation procedures have not been announced, but

WRA officials admit they are being worked out as this is written.

"We have a cross section of a people," a WRA spokesman said. "There is a small group that must be regarded as definitely dangerous—trouble makers so long as they are in relocation centers, and possibly dangerous to society and to our national security if they are out. It is our intention to find them and see they are put in the proper place—and the proper place is not a relocation center. We are just as convinced that most of the evacuees are loyal to the principles of democracy and are desirable residents for any community. Our hope is to give them an opportunity to make new lives for themselves in normal communities in private employment."

Ralph P. Merritt, now project director at Manzanar, has an outstanding record of public and humanitarian service in California. He helped build the University of California, was Food Administrator of the State in the last war, made the name "Sun Maid" on raisins known the world over when he was president of that co-operative, and was brought out of retirement on a ranch in Nevada to take over the Manzanar job. Robert L. Brown, assistant project director and author of an earlier article on Manzanar in our pages (Autumn 1942), sends us a copy of a letter Mr. Merritt wrote his aunt on Christmas Day, which perhaps better than anything else reflects the spirit of the administrative staff in dealing with the explosive situation before and after the riot. With his permission, we quote the letter here:

Dear Aunt —:

It is Christmas morning at Manzanar. The sun has not yet topped the Inyos but its rays have turned the gray granite peaks

of the Sierra to rose. Below is a white band of new snow. Still in the dark shadows are the rows of barracks that house our ten thousand Japanese evacuees.

Your father was the pioneer of Manzanar. He was the first white man to break the ground of this desert. He built his home where our barracks stand and here you were born. In those years following the Civil War there also were soldiers in Owens Valley to protect the settlers from the Indians. This was the first time Manzanar faced the problem of race relationship. You and your brothers and sisters solved that problem by playing with Indian children. Your father solved it by becoming "the Captain" to every Indian in the Valley and the most honored man of his day among his Indian friends. Today Manzanar has again become the scene of a test of racial tolerance—the greatest test a democracy has ever met. We are face to face with the question of whether we can live in peace and security with American citizens of Japanese an-

cestry and Japanese who by virtue of our laws are non-citizens. To all of them we have pointed to American democracy as a better way of living. These people—ten thousand of them—are now held inside barbed-wire fence as a measure of national protection in this time of war.

The reality of this great drama is on my mind this Christmas morning because only thirty days ago the War Relocation Authority sent me here to Manzanar as Project Director with full administrative authority. It was like coming home to be back on the desert of Inyo that I have loved, and once again to see the seven mile shadow of Mount Williamson. But Manzanar was a volcano about to erupt. I knew that too when I came. Evil work had been done by the slow boiling of many bitternesses. Some were old—some as new as yesterday. These ten thousand people had no grudge in common. Many people were filled with many hates about many things—race hates—war hates—political hates—class hates such as those between Japanese born in America to whom Japan is a foreign country and Japanese born in America but educated in Japan who have become pro-Japanese—and just the common kind of hates we all know too well.

On a Sunday morning not three weeks ago a mob gathered like the summer thunder storm that sweeps from the Sierra. As darkness came on, mob violence grew and broke from the control of its leaders. As I walked in that mob at noon talking with people here and there and urging them to be calm and go home, I thought of many things. I thought of you and the happy ranch life here of years ago. I thought of our men overseas who might be more cruelly treated by Japan if tear gas failed to break up this mob. I thought of the innocent who might be killed while the guilty escaped, if I had to turn to the

military as a last resort. But after dark there was no other course. Soon there was the rattle of gunfire. Men fell in the blackness.

For days we lived under the military—no Japanese were seen outside the barracks—none came to work—sullen defiance hung over the Camp. What would break the tension? How could these ten thousand people be led to want to work and play again? Could the real spirit of America be made to live among them?

Last Monday we buried the dead. At the Buddhist funeral held in the woods beyond the Lacey Ranch, we mourned with their families the death of the two boys—innocent of wrongdoing—the victims of the riot. The only soldier present stood at the head of one of the coffins—the brother of the dead boy. This Japanese American soldier, a member of Uncle Sam's Army, was on active duty at a distant point, but the Army granted my request to bring him home to his family. The Buddhist priest prayed that the lives of these young men might be a sacrifice for the sins of all the camp. May their God and our God hear that prayer!

The next day the Japanese workers—four thousand men and women—were back at work. On Wednesday I suggested that the tragedy should not rob little children of Christmas trees and presents or young people of singing carols.

Last evening we visited our Children's Village with its 65 orphans. They sang "Jingle Bells" and "Away in the Manger" and we helped them open packages that were greeted with the usual shrieks of joy while Santa Claus with a Japanese accent shouted greetings to all. Before the door of our home in the barracks, there was no mob but a hundred young people singing "Oh, Come All Ye Faithful."

The star was overhead and the ragged

COMMON GROUND

crest of the Sierra was shining in the moonlight of Christmas Eve. Peace and good will had come to Manzanar.

So we greet this Christmas morning. Shall the problems of keeping this peace and good will be solved by the military—or by being overtrustful of this show of goodness—or is there some safe middle course through which the ideals of peace

and good will can mingle with the realities of race tolerance? If there is an answer, it will be the cornerstone upon which a future peace of the world will rest.

This story of your old home is my Christmas present to you.

Affectionately,

RALPH

DO YOU BELIEVE IN THE FOUR FREEDOMS?

SALLY LOWENHAUPT

I BOARDED a train in Oakland, California, and sat down next to a pleasant woman who turned out to be a teacher in the public schools of Oregon. I had just attended the Institute of International Relations at Mills College, where we had discussed America's contribution to a durable peace. My spirits were high. Here was a chance to talk to someone who would be responsive. I told her about the postwar planning analysis I had heard, far-sighted and courageous in direction, its scope the common man in every form of social relationship. It made sense.

"Do you know," I said, "it seemed as if the Four Freedoms were already being woven into a world pattern of achievement—it was that real."

"I can believe it," she answered. "I think the President's speech was epoch-making. It gave one renewed purpose. What do you think I did in my enthusiasm?"

"What?" I asked.

"I have forty pupils in secondary grade, and I made every one of them write a composition on the Four Freedoms. We called it 'Revaluating the Values'."

"I'd liked to have seen them," I said. "It would have been interesting to get their interpretation of intent in Freedom from Fear. How did they apply it to the race relations situation right out here?"

"What do you mean?" she asked.

"The Japanese problem at the moment," I said.

"That's not a problem," she answered promptly. "If it is, it could easily be solved. If I had anything to say, I'd just dump every Jap in this country right in the ocean."

It was the same old story—the ideal to which one subscribes intellectually having nothing whatsoever to do with one's conduct. But it was a discordant note now, with democracy challenged on all sides, with the forces of history speeded up and time certainly not on the side of confusion.

The next evening I met a man and his son of sixteen. He owned an important business and had come up the hard way. After talking about the war, the peace, and then the new world order, I said, "For a good start we could take the Four Free-

DO YOU BELIEVE IN THE FOUR FREEDOMS?

doms and go on from there with the blueprints."

"Oh, yes," he smiled, and looked amused. "Nothing finer—that's a good idea—great—yes, sir—if you can do it."

"Why can't you do it?" I asked.

"Well," he answered, "right off the reel I better tell you I'm not a New Dealer."

"What has the New Deal to do with the Four Freedoms?" I asked.

"Same label—same outfit behind it. All the same 'humanitarian' stuff—the CCC, the WPA, the NYA. Every time a new letter comes up, you put your hands in your pocket for taxes and more taxes. Then you take care of a lot of fellows who never did a lick of work in all their lives. Yes, maybe there's a stray one who wants to work, but then you go ahead and start to spoil his morale in the bargain."

A young voice came from the other end of the dinner table. "Would you rather they would starve, Dad?"

The man did not reply but turned to me good-naturedly and said, "I've got an idealist over there. That's what they learn in books, but what they don't learn in books is that there will always be some who have and some who haven't. You can't change human nature."

"But," I said, "suppose you set up a higher level of social purpose?"

"That's it," replied the boy eagerly. "All we need is a brand new set of responsibilities, and I'm telling you, Dad, that that will do something to human conduct all right—maybe to human nature in the end. Anyway, democracy would work! No fooling."

I must have smiled in deep approval, for the man turned to me suddenly and said, "You don't happen to be a Communist, do you?"

One late afternoon in Santa Barbara I had fifteen minutes to wait for the bus which winds its way past the Old Mis-

sion. Next to me was a young girl wearing a sports outfit with the letters UCLA (University of California in Los Angeles) embroidered on the back. After we had talked a while, I asked, "Do you think your generation will carry out the Four Freedoms?"

"They better had," she said firmly.

"Do all of you feel that way?" I persisted.

"I'd guess that most of us who think about it do—and the rest—they'll come along and like it."

"But the risks and sacrifices and adjustments—you know what is involved, don't you?" I asked.

"Sure," she said. "They'll pinch a little. There are lots of things we shall have to scrap, including a favorite prejudice here and there—but it will be worth it. There will be a peace and a new world and we will have something to say about it."

I told her about my experience on the train. Suddenly she said, "Do you see that girl across the street, with a Red Cross insignia? I think it would be great to ask all the people we meet if they believe in the Four Freedoms. If they do, we'll sew insignias on their sleeves—a tag for the Four Freedoms. Then we can say right away, 'There's a man who has faith in the principles of democracy—there's a man who believes in human decency.'"

In a small city in Colorado I met a minister. He was about fifty, a college graduate, well liked. In the Four Freedoms we seemed to have found common interest immediately. "Yes, Freedom from Want is not a dream any more," he said. "It can be worked out in time if it extends itself over the world and if there is wisdom, sincerity, and faith in planning."

"Do you think many of us have that faith?" I asked.

"I'm sure of it," he answered. "Even science is directing us. We know now that the old economy failed because it

COMMON GROUND

had no relation to reality—to the indisputable fact of the interdependence of peoples and nations.”

Eagerly I said, “We can start to build up new race relations right here, pulling up the conflicts from their social and economic roots. It would be grand to start right in our own country with the poll tax, wouldn’t it?”

“The poll tax?” he said doubtfully. “No . . . I don’t agree with you there. That sort of thing won’t work. You see most people don’t realize that in some towns in the United States there are two thousand Negroes and three hundred white people. Do you know what would happen? The first thing you know, they would have a Negro mayor.”

“Wouldn’t that be thoroughly representative?” I asked.

“I’m afraid you don’t understand me,” he answered quickly. “I myself have worked with Negroes and understand and sympathize with their problems. They are good people and I like them. But each race has its own contributions to make. Democracy works best that way. For example, the Negro sings well, makes a good chauffeur, is an excellent cotton picker and porter. He should follow. . . .”

I thought of UCLA and her words that late afternoon: “There are lots of things we shall have to scrap, including a favorite prejudice here and there.”

A month later, I was talking to a young man in a filling station in Missouri. He had enlisted in the Navy and was saying good-bye. “I hope I get to China,” he said. “There must be a lot of real fellows over there. After the war, with everyone learning to fly, we’ll be getting to know some of the people we didn’t know before. Maybe it will be a good thing for us.”

“You think that something will come out of this war, then?” I asked.

He took out of his pocket a newspaper clipping, dated May 8th. A sentence out of Henry Wallace’s speech was underlined:

“The people’s revolution is on the march, and the Devil and all his angels cannot prevail against it.”

Sally Lowenhaupt was born in St. Louis and educated at Washington University. She has served on the Boards of the International Institute and the Urban League.

CANTEEN

VICTOR WITTGENSTEIN

ONE evening last fall, I was sitting on a bench in Central Park, taking a breath of fresh air and admiring the fantastic panorama of lighted buildings that face north. It was almost time for me to wander across the street to do my bit as one of the hosts at the 65th Street Canteen, run by the Jewish Welfare Board for the uso—a Canteen, let me add, at which men in uniform, of any faith, are made welcome. A husky buck private, a typical midwestern giant of six feet three, was sitting on the bench adjoining mine.

He offered me a cigarette, and in a few moments we were engaged in conversation. He had the most remarkable vocabulary of profane and filthy words I have ever heard, and I've been around and heard some in my time. For the want of something better to say, I asked whether he had been to the Stage Door Canteen, that haven for soldiers and sailors.

"What d'ya mean—that stink hole in Times Square?"

I gulped and shook my head.

"Yeah, I bin there, an' so help my guts, I ain't never goin' ag'in."

"Why?" I asked.

"'Cause, like every ——— thing, it's run by a lot o' ——— Jews."

"I thought it was run by actors," I said.

"Actors, my ———! They're nothin' but a lot o' ——— Jews. This ——— war is being financed by Jewish millionaires. Hell, they started it so's the Jews could profiteer."

"I believe I did hear it was the Jews who attacked Pearl Harbor," I said.

"Well, now, that ain't exactly a fact,

but I wouldn't be surprised if in a round-about way——"

"Do you know any Jews?" I interrupted.

"Sure thing. We got two in our Company—couple o' beauts."

"Have you ever been in that Canteen over there?" I asked, pointing to the place I was about to go.

"You mean that ——— sheeny joint? Jeez, I wouldn't be found dead there."

"It is a 'sheeny joint,' but do you know that 90 per cent of the boys who go there are Gentile—and they seem to come out alive?"

"That's a lot o' hooey, pal; no self-respectin' fellah'd eat with those Christ killers."

That did it. I hadn't heard that vile expression since I was a boy, and it riled me just as it did then, when I felt I was responsible for a crime I hadn't committed.

"Now listen to me, you. You're talking to a full-blooded Jew, so——"

"Aw, but you're a real guy an' a pal. I don't have any feelin'——"

"Just the same, I was among those who started this war, according to you."

"Hold on thar, buddie. I—er——"

"I ought to do one of two things—but I won't do either."

"What's that?"

"I ought to give you a good sock in the nose—which wouldn't be very sensible."

"What d'ya mean?"

"You'd beat me up. You're bigger and stronger than I am, and that wouldn't be fun—for me."

COMMON GROUND

"No kiddin'."

"The other thing I ought to do is stop this gabbing with you and leave you flat. But I'm not going to do that either, because I want to take you over to that 'sheeny joint,' as you call it, and introduce you to a couple of Jews."

"I wouldn't use one of 'em for a door mat!"

"What with things being rationed, you might have to use something a darn sight less comfortable than a Jew as a door mat before this war is over," I ventured.

At that, I got up. The boy was obviously embarrassed and at a loss to know exactly what to do.

"Wish ya didn't have to go," he said somewhat hesitantly. "I sorta enjoyed talkin' to a real fellah."

"Even if he's a real Jew?"

"Don't be sore. I jes git my mouth full of a lot o' words an' spit 'em out as they come."

"How about walking me over there? No harm looking at the outside. We could do a bit more gabbing."

"But I ain't goin' in!"

So we strolled slowly toward the gay uso flag, with its hospitable sign of welcome. At the entrance I stopped and said, "You say I'm your pal. If I asked you—as a favor—to have a look at the 'joint,' would you do it?"

He hesitated some time. "Bein' as you put it thataway, I reckon I ain't in no position to refuse."

It is a rule of the Canteen to register every man in uniform, both for the sake of the record and to be able to write to the boy's parents that he has visited there and seemed well, etc. There ensued a long argument with my soldier before he finally consented to conform to the rule.

I could not help noticing his surprise when he entered the hall with its inviting dining room, bounded on one side by a luxurious lounge with beautifully ap-

pointed writing desks, with tables creaking under the weight of every up-to-date magazine, with overstuffed chairs and sofas galore. On the other side are game tables for ping-pong, billiards, Chinese checkers, and cards. In the center is a large dance floor and a spacious stage, where artists great and small delight in entertaining the boys.

A particularly lovely hostess met us with a smile and the usual, "May I give you a nice dinner?"

My aggressive companion looked at me helplessly and stuttered, "Is—is it free?"

"As the air you breathe," I answered.

He had a man-sized meal. An attractive junior hostess joined him, and out of the corner of my eye I saw him deep in conversation with her. Later he gave a good account of himself on the dance floor, jitterbugging wildly. I chuckled to myself but went on about my duties of the evening, playing checkers with a Gob, all the while keeping tabs on my belligerent soldier.

As I was about to leave, two hours later, he tugged at my sleeve. "Say, pardner, I jes got to speak to you. I don't know how to say it—I—well, I—sorta shot off my trap out yonder, more'n I had ought. But don't be sore. 'Cause I meant it when I said you're my pal."

"Think no more about it. I won't. Did you enjoy your dinner?"

"I'll say. It was jes mighty fine. Looka here. I'd like to ask you a question. Are all these here folks sheen—, I mean Jew people?"

"Every last one. Even the food you ate was Jewish."

"What d'ya mean? I heerd tell o' lots o' queer things, but I never heerd o' Jew food."

"It's called kosher food."

"Kosher?"

"Food prepared according to the law of Moses."

CANTEEN

"Holy Jesus!"

"Holy Moses," I corrected.

"Kin I come back sometime?"

"Any time you like. And bring as many of your buddies as you can."

"Hell, I'll bring the whole damn Company!"

"Look here, soldier. I'm going to ask you to do me a favor."

"Any damn thing you say. Shoot."

"From now on, when you speak of us, I mean us Jews, call us Jews, for that's what we are. Not sheenies."

"I sure will, an' no kiddin'!"

"Good night, soldier." I extended my hand.

He grasped it warmly. "Call me Al. An' no hard feelin's, I hope, Mr.—Mr.—by the way, what's your name?"

"Victor."

"Good night, Uncle Vic—an' I'll be seein' ya—soon!"

After this, almost every time I was at the Canteen, there was my swaggering soldier, cavorting around as if the place were his own. He brought droves of boys to share in what he regards as *his* discovery.

"I ain't said sheeny onct since that night, an' I'd slug any guy in the kisser who did," he assured me.

A few nights ago he appeared—rather sheepishly—with two black eyes and other signs of battle.

"For crying out loud," I exclaimed. "What's happened to you?"

"Aw, nothin'," he said evasively.

"Come clean, Al. Tell me about it."

"Well, if you have to know, I was with a bunch o' fellahs, an' I jes tole 'em I was keepin' company with a Jew girl from up hyar—that I'd been to her house for dinner to meet her ole man an' her mom—an' that they were mighty nice folks—jes folks like anybody else. Well—an' they started razzin' me an' ended by sayin' rotten things about the Jews."

"For instance?" I interrupted.

"They said the Jews started this hyar war, an' a lot o' things else that got my goat. Things I know ain't true. So I landed into two of 'em, an' firs' thing ya know, it was a free for all. Nobody knowin' who was fightin' or for what. 'Cept me an' my buddie. An' if you think I got beat up, you ain't seen nothin'! You oughta see the other guys!"

*Victor Wittgenstein is a pianist, lecturer, and playwright, whose first play *Encore* starred Ethel Barrymore.*

SEEDS WITHOUT SOIL

FANNIE COOK

KIMBO was set on going. Glory-be could see that. She knew she would have to go with him, only she didn't see how she could make herself do it.

Her feet dragged across the hard-packed mud of the cabin floor. Her hands twitched the tin dipper, tossing drops upon the leaves of her plant. Her black fingers, purple against the green, touched at each leaf and touched again. They had touched that way at the heads of her boys and girls when she knew one among them would be leaving the cabin soon, for good. They had touched that way, too, when her babies were dying.

Outdoors, women's voices wove a deep murmur. The families were gathering to go to the roadside.

Glory-be knew all about Kimbo's plan to show folks how bad times were for the croppers. Union Man said they must sit yonder by the roadside, sleep yonder, and stay yonder, for the world to see. Kimbo had explained it to her.

"Seeing us a-setting out in the weather, folks will know how it was with us back in the cabins: no floors, no winders, only holes in the roof. Jes being out yonder's gonna be like telling folks we'd ruther be 'thout nothen a-tall than in them shackly ole cabins." Kimbo's voice had looped high and low like Union Man's.

"Reckon I'd ruther be hyere," Glory-be answered him. "Hyere I got me a stove and a plant. A right purty plant."

Kimbo scowled at her plant. It was child to one owned by the landlord's wife. Last summer, seeing its pretty leaves,

Glory-be's eyes had rolled with desire. The white woman had broken off a leaf together with its root and laid them in Glory-be's hands. On the way home Kimbo had said, "You ain't got no call to have no truck with a landlord's wife." Glory-be had answered, "My plant, it's purty."

But now Kimbo wasn't talking about her plant. He was talking about her stove. "You ain't had nothen much to cook on it, not fer a long stretch, you ain't. Little ole baby stove like it is, reckon last winter it were too big."

He hurried out, angry. But he hadn't talked against her plant. Glory-be reckoned Kimbo knew she had to have something to tend. She had got in the way of tending something, looking after all those children of his. Year after year she had given them birth. She had got so she thought of a new baby not just as the eighth child, but as the one before the ninth.

And when the ninth came, he was the one before the tenth. It had gone on like that, cotton harvest and baby harvest coming together, one almost as certain as the other, the ninth being the one before the tenth, the tenth the one before the eleventh—both of those died—and then the dead eleventh being the one before the living twelfth, the twelfth the one before the thirteenth, but the thirteenth was the last, the very last.

By that time the older ones were off having baby crops of their own, and the younger ones were fighting with each other and dying and being looked after by

SEEDS WITHOUT SOIL

Glory-be. And then one day, the cabin was emptied of young folks.

Hard times drove them across the country with the force and the aimlessness of a tornado. Her children were scattered, bits of herself here and there, living at places she had never before heard of.

Kimbo and Glory-be were alone and times were harder than ever. Big farms and big machines and less food and worse cabins. But now the world was going to hear about it. Union Man said so. He was a black preacher who had got angry and turned into a Union Man.

Touching at the leaves, Glory-be tried to make herself care, tried to make herself believe that, when the world did hear, something good would happen to Kimbo, like Union Man said. When Kimbo had that look in his eyes, that look of holding to the future, she loved him most of all. She had faith in Kimbo's faith and in Union Man's too, only for herself she was too tired to live by faith.

"Most all my years, I done hadda cook in the open," she told the longest leaf of all as her fourth finger stroked it. "Now I got me a stove and I got you and I don't want none to go off and leave ya. Lawd God, I don't."

She could carry the plant, she had told herself that, hundreds of times during the nights when she lay there rest-broke with worry; but even a stout plant like hers couldn't live out in a January freeze. Plants weren't like people. Plants out in a freeze, died. People out in a freeze hoped themselves warm. But Kimbo didn't see.

Glory-be could hear the others were ready to march. Even the women with babies in their arms hadn't made the fuss she was making. Their talk summoned her; their voices called.

Then Kimbo stood in the doorway. If she didn't come, he would go off and leave her.

"Shet that doah," she told him.

"I'm a-waiting fer ya, Glory-be," he answered.

"Go long with ya. . . ." Her voice was high.

"They's moving off."

"Kimbo, I'll foller. . . . I'll foller, Kimbo," she said.

Kimbo's hands pulled down at his vest. Slowly they pinned together his ragged coat and tied the muffler around his head and neck. Slowly they heaved the big bundle to his shoulder. Then, quickly, they opened the door and he was gone.

Outside, Kimbo didn't join in the song the crowd was singing. But he saw that even the shufflingest among them was keeping time. The beat was slow, but firm. It would get them to the roadside, miles away.

Once or twice Kimbo looked back. He wondered if Glory-be still stood there in the middle of the floor with her face stiffened against its own weeping as it used to be when he and she together were digging a grave for a dead baby.

But he knew she would follow. A woman doesn't bear a man thirteen children and then not cleave unto his ways because she loves a plant and a stove.

Glory-be was coming and she was stepping-proud! In her arms she carried something larger than a baby, carried it as if it was a baby, a baby to shout to the Lawd about! Carried it as if it was feather-light.

Kimbo pretended not to see her. He looked ahead and moved down the road leading the others.

Then a woman's voice called out, "Glory-be, if you don't beat all!"

The singing stopped.

Kimbo turned, "That stove ain't ourn, Glory-be!"

"Suah ain't!" She was laughing-happy. "Stove ain't ourn. That stove, he mine!"

"That stove, he part of the landlord's

COMMON GROUND

furnish," Kimbo protested. "Union Man said we mustn't taken nothen only our own fixings."

Kimbo was a tall man and he looked angrily down at Glory-be. His long fingers were stretched for grabbing. Dread darted through the crowd.

"That stove," Glory-be answered him, and just kept right on walking up to Kimbo, "that there little ole baby stove, he ain't no furnish now! He my own furnish. My furnish to my little ole plant!"

She patted at the rusty iron and Kimbo knew now why she had carried the stove, why she hugged it to her gently as if it was a baby. Within it were Glory-be's

And now Glory-be was no longer angry. She was stepping-proud. She was a woman he had never met before, a woman crazy-glad!

Kimbo turned and walked on.

Out on the roadside Kimbo was busy running back and forth with Union Man, and Glory-be was lonely. The other women nursed their babies and slapped at their children and sang and made jokes about the landlords and talked about their troubles. They had each other and they had their memories and their anger and their faith. Like Glory-be, they were cold and hungry. But they warmed with the



green leaves, safe from the cold.

But Kimbo hadn't wanted to take anything that wasn't his. He didn't want to run off with the sheriff at his heels. He wanted to do just as Union Man said.

Then he saw Glory-be hadn't disjointed the stove's pipe. She had broken it across. Those baby-petting hands had been angry-strong.

excitement of being together. They could laugh about this joke they were playing on the landlord, they and all the cotton-field black folks of the Missouri boot-heel. They could laugh about the way he'd look when cotton chopping time came around. But Kimbo could not coax Glory-be away from her stove.

Her hands had taken to hitting their

backs together. Sometimes they would knock at each other by the hour. They had started it out on the roadside, before the highway patrolmen had herded Kimbo and Glory-be into a truck with the other folks, standing cattle-like to be herded, and dumped them at last in a Negro churchyard outside a big town. After that, for a while, her fingers had been quiet. Then they went back to hitting their knuckles together.

One day Kimbo's hands held Glory-be's unmoving for a moment. "Nobody ain't gonna take your little ole stove," he said.

"Nobody ain't!" she answered.

Glory-be knew Kimbo was ashamed of her. He knew she didn't share his faith in Union Man. When Union Man talked, Kimbo's eyes froze with hope. Then Glory-be couldn't look at Kimbo nor at Union Man either. And when Union Man whistled through his teeth, Kimbo ran from her side. Glory-be got so she hated Union Man more than any landlord in all the cotton country. Sometimes Kimbo told her she hadn't done right by the others, keeping a stove for a plant when it was needed for cooking. Union Man had said they must share.

Often the women made spiteful remarks about her stove so that Glory-be could hear. Glory-be didn't care what they said. She didn't care at all. When she wasn't knocking her knuckles together, she was taking her plant out of the stove to give it light and air and putting it in again to keep it warm. It was getting a new leaf.

Then one day Union Man had to run for his life and Kimbo began to live by what Union Man would say when he came back.

The ice melted off and the ground swelled with its freedom. Here and there in the churchyard, beyond the clearing

where the tents stood in rows, large patches crumbled into loose soil as it stretched for liberty.

"It's come free, that there earth have. Free, like we is," Glory-be mumbled. "We's free to be wind-scattered." She looked up at Kimbo. "Union Man ain't come back none."

Kimbo knelt and smoothed some frost-patch soil between his fingers. "It's the best earth they is," he said, making out he was talking like a farmer. "The onliest earth fit for growing things up in. . . . Union Man he'll come back."

When the warm weather came and it was time for Glory-be to take her plant out of the stove, the Law drove up to the churchyard with a paper and told the croppers they must move on.

The white man who brought the paper was right soft-spoken, but he wouldn't give in. Yes, he knew this was their church and they had paid rent on it for years; he knew the dead were their own dead; he knew the churchyard was owned by a woman in town who said they could use it. He knew all that, but a lady down the road said they were a nuisance. They had crossed her property and fished in her creek and hung their wash on her fence. They had to go.

Glory-be was the only one who didn't cry. Go or stay, she had her plant and her stove.

Kimbo was moaning-miserable. What would Union Man have him do? Union Man had left him in charge. Kimbo called the people together and shouted about what Union Man would say when he came back. But he was shouting too loud, Glory-be saw—shouting to prove to himself that Union Man hadn't forgotten them.

Then he hitched himself a ride into town and returned with news of a stretch of timberland where they could pitch

COMMON GROUND

camp. Other roadsiders were already on their way. It was ninety acres and just beyond the next county.

"How fur's that?" Glory-be asked.

"'Long about forty mile."

Glory-be sat down. "I cain't walk no forty mile," she said.

"Don't be like that!" Kimbo scolded.

"I cain't walk no forty mile."

She was knocking her knuckles together. Kimbo saw she had forgotten him. She was worrying about her plant.

He cursed the plant.

"You jealous!" She laughed, a high, scornful laugh.

After dark, a truck with its lights off drove into the churchyard. Crowding around, seeing the landlord's name on its side, folks were afraid. But the man who leaped down talked in whispers with Kimbo, and then Kimbo told them to climb in. A lot of folks had to leave their clutter, but Glory-be brought her stove and her plant.

Glory-be had seen cotton fields and creeks all her life, but she had never seen hills. The next morning when the yellow of the dawn smiled through the blue haze, she saw the Ozark mounds clustering next to each other like the heads of black children in the doorway of a cabin. She grew shouting-happy. She ran up and down the slope, hugging the trees and chanting, "Glory-be's on the Lawd's own bosom!" and then the others began to sing and Glory-be sang with them.

Kimbo said, "It's rock. 'Tain't no good fer growing." He was longing for some earth to tend.

"I ain't paying you no mind," Glory-be answered and went right on being shouting-happy.

Wood lay everywhere. Evenings were cool and the campfire friendly. Nobody bothered Glory-be any more about her stove. One day at the bottom of the hill she found a floor of ferns. With her

fingers she dug up a pretty one and carried it carefully to the top. Then she made a leaf basket and packed it with the soft black earth for the roots. The sun was hot, too hot for a plant to be moved. Glory-be put the fern inside her stove, laid it in the round metal belly as gently as ever she had laid a baby in a cotton row.

There was no word of Union Man.

Kimbo began to chop down trees, said he aimed to notch them into each other and build Glory-be a cabin. She knew by his talk he yearned for a home. He was tired of being a seed without soil. His eyes were forgetting that look of holding to the future.

By midsummer several dozen cabins circled the top of the Lawd's Bosom Hill, like children playing ring-around-a-rosy, and within the circle no trees remained. Cleared of stumps, Kimbo said, this soil might grow a garden crop. Once he touched at the leaves of Glory-be's plant.

But for all his talking he was too spent to do anything about clearing stumps. He was played out—looking for Union Man, Glory-be said. Kimbo said no, he had worked too fast at the cabin. It stood now as large as the one they had left. Kimbo's notches fitted into each other neatly. When Kimbo complained of the misery, Glory-be had helped him pack mud between the logs. For a roof he laid leafy branches across the top. Not much more water came through the roof than had come through the old one. The only time the rain spanked down hard that summer, the day was hot and the drops were welcome. They settled the dust of the cabin floor.

Kimbo and Glory-be were fixed right fine now, only for the misery in Kimbo's chest and eyes. He lay in the corner on some boughs that Glory-be had covered with his coat.

She stood her plants where he could see them.

SEEDS WITHOUT SOIL

"They purty, Glory-be," he said. "They right purty."

She fetched herbs and cooked them to cure him, but she had no faith in what she gave. To work its miracles, medicine had to be poured by hands that believed.

Coming back into the cabin one hot August day, she saw Kimbo's fingers tapping at the earth floor. She remembered how her own had knocked their knuckles together.

"Come planting time, you'll be right busy, Kimbo," she said.

"Planting time, it's a long journey off." He sighed.

She stood still and looked down at him. His body lay stretched out limp as a shadow. She saw how the long legs and arms would look when they were dead. Then they would just be quiet. Now they were weighted, weighted with something heavy, something like she had felt when she had to leave their plantation cabin.

Her hand reached out to stroke Kimbo's head. Then she drew it back. Stroking was for children or for dying folk, when you knew you couldn't help and your heart was sorrowing. But for Kimbo, it mustn't be like that!

She scolded down at him, "You got it right good. You got your own cabin. No boss-man to tell you to git out. You got rations give to you free by the relief. You got nothen to do but sit in the sun and be happy. . . . You got me, Kimbo."

Kimbo didn't answer, and Glory-be remembered how once, when she thought she would have to leave her stove and plant, she had not remembered she had Kimbo.

He opened his eyes and turned them up toward the branches. "Reckon a man don't count fer nothen with a woman when she ain't got no babies and no cabin to do for. . . . Reckon a woman don't count fer nothen with a man when he ain't got no plowing and no picking to

do. . . . Reckon a woman and a man is made fer to work side by side. Reckon when that's done, reckon they ain't got no call to go on cleaving together. . . ."

The lids slid back over the staring eyeballs. Glory-be turned cold. Kimbo didn't



care whether she stayed or went. She could hitch her way up to the city and live there with her oldest girl and Kimbo wouldn't care. His voice had been gentle, but that was what he meant.

Again she reached out her hand for stroking and again she drew it back. Stroking was for when you gave up. Kimbo couldn't give up. Kimbo was a smart man. After Union Man went, Kimbo had managed for everyone in the churchyard. Only now no more managing was needed. Kimbo's work was through. White folks they had never seen let them use this land, and the relief ladies were doing all Kimbo had tried to do, doing it better than Kimbo

COMMON GROUND

could. He always walked away when the relief ladies' auto came to Lawd's Bosom Hill.

She went outside. The noon sun poured its fury on her head. Kimbo's misery, it's a misery in his ways, she thought—a misery from a tearing apart of his ways. If she could only pour something out of a bottle, something to make Kimbo stop lying there more weighted than a dead man. Kimbo wasn't a-cleaving no more. He was fixing to die—not his body—jes Kimbo.

That evening she sat outside the cabin on a tree stump. She watched the purple shadows drain from the hilltops into the valleys, and the valleys grow gray. Then the moonlight held the mist risen from the deep places, in dull clouds, unmoving.

The other cabins were silent. There were no sounds except the moans of the timberland creatures, of the birds squeaking in their sleep, of the owl hooting. After a while, another call came, faintly, then nearer. It was like the wail of a hawk. Glory-be shivered.

She turned and saw Kimbo in the doorway, weak against the wall.

"It's Union Man!" he whispered.

He pursed his lips to whistle, and then he didn't whistle, as if his faith was too weak for whistling.

Glory-be whistled. And whistled again. Then there were climbing footsteps, and panting, and Union Man was asking for water.

Indoors, the men talked for a long time. At first Kimbo's voice crackled like a sick voice. Then it became Kimbo's, old but not crackled.

Glory-be walked away from the cabin into the center of the cleared land. She looked off into the night-purple of the horizon, purple deep as trouble, clear as hope, pretty as the joy of a baby.

When she went back to the cabin again, she found Kimbo outdoors, leaning

against the cabin wall, his arms spread, his palms flat.

"Union Man, he gone," Kimbo said.

"You is better," Glory-be answered.

"Union Man, he done come back."

"Union Man, he say he need Kimbo. He got work for Kimbo. Union Man kind of work." Kimbo's head nodded toward the cotton fields below where the land lay flat and there were no ferns to be lifted from the earth, only plants to be had from the hands of a landlord's wife.

"Union Man, he hunted by the Law," Glory-be grumbled.

Kimbo stood free of the wall. "The Law ain't hunting Union Man no harder'n the lawless is. Union Man, he hunted by the Law and the lawless alike. The lawless, they's a-teaching the Law."

So Kimbo was set on going. Kimbo was cleaving to his faith again.

"It's forty mile," he said.

"Forty mile ain't fur, Kimbo," Glory-be said slowly.

"Come a body cain't hitch no ride, it right fur."

Glory-be watched Kimbo's eyes shifting from stars to clearing and back to stars again. Kimbo was fixing to be a cropper without a crop, a cropper forever without a cabin.

Glory-be sighed. He'd be needing a right smart lot of tending. He'd be like a growing leaf wanting water.

"Soon as dawn sets in," she told him, "I'll give out my plants. And my stove. Forty mile, it ain't fur, come your arms is free. Glory-be, she gonna keep her arms free—free for swinging!"

Fannie Cook has been a frequent contributor to COMMON GROUND. Her last novel, Boot-Heel Doctor, depicted the 1939 roadside demonstration of sharecroppers in the Missouri boot-heel.

The drawings are by David Fredenthal.

SINCERELY YOURS

PHYLLIS K. H. PATCHETT

EXCEPT for my grandmother who came here from Switzerland, I can, if I want to bother, trace my ancestry on both sides of the family to several Revolutionary soldiers, one man who actually signed the Mayflower Compact when it was written and not one hundred years afterward, and a signer of the Declaration of Independence. In a way, I am rather proud of that heritage, but unfortunately I find it quite a task to live up to!

What do I think or feel about all "these foreigners" being here? I'm afraid I don't feel they are "these foreigners." It has been my happy and, judging from my Anglo-Saxon friends, unique experience to have been brought up to believe that the old-stock virtues of tolerance and a living, not lip, service to the ideals of free speech, freedom of worship, equal rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are the expected and routine thing. Not until I went to college did it finally dawn on me that I came from a rather exceptional family, and that most people felt a distinct difference between themselves and "these foreigners"—particularly "these foreigners" in the lower income groups. I was always allowed to pick my friends as I saw fit, no matter how unpronounceable their last names might be. I was sent to the public schools, and went as a matter of course, although a great many of the children in the same so-called "class of people" to which my family belonged went to private schools. Perhaps I have been unduly fortunate to have discovered early in my existence that it is not what a

person is called, but what he is that makes all the difference in the world; not the income group or racial group that he comes from, but what he goes to.

I should most certainly say that "these foreigners" are an asset to the town and country in which they reside. I should go further: where they are not an asset, it is because they have not been allowed to be, largely by that class of good old Anglo-Saxons to which I have the dubious honor of belonging. Of course our immigrants should not be "sent back where they came from"—unless someone is strong-minded enough to send us all back and give the country back to the Indians, who seem to be the forgotten men in everyone's mind!

From my own personal experience, which could be broadened into national scope, I can give a good many reasons for believing as I do that our immigrants are an asset. First and foremost, they are not just "immigrants"; no matter where they came from, they are human beings with all the general run of human faults and virtues. The gentle kindness and goodwill extended to me by several Italian American boys and girls during the year I was editor-in-chief of the high school magazine is something I shall never forget. They had a practicality not often attributed to them; a willingness to work like slaves at the dirty jobs of getting out the issues; an artistic sense for design and layout unapproached by most of the rest of the staff. And never, in any home which I have entered, excepting those of my Jewish friends, have I met with such a gracious

joy in giving joy to others. Your old-stock American cannot begin to approach the happy balance they have achieved in charming hospitality and genuine warmth and friendship. They don't have to gush to impress you with their feelings toward you, nor do you have to break down any great barrier of reserve to get to them.

In Vermont I found the "French Canucks" with a strong, earthy sense of humor, an ability to make the drabest and most oppressive sort of country-poverty existence into something lively, fun to be a part of. Working in department stores, I cannot help but admire the fine brains of the Jewish people with whom I have come in contact. And in them, once they accept you as a friend, there is a whole-hearted friendship that I have experienced from no other group of people quite so much. (And I might as well confess right now that I am rabid on the Jewish question. I have played with Jewish children in my youth; I have shared their home life; I count myself very lucky to have a good many Jewish friends and acquaintances, not only among the more well-to-do Jews but among the middle class as well. I've read all the books I could get my hands on dealing with Jewish people and their traditions and problems. And I have come out of all that with a more pro-Jewish feeling than most of my friends have anti-Jewish, and, believe me, that's going some! I could write a book on how I feel and what I think of the Jewish people. I will say this: generally speaking, the reason many Jews are "Kikes"—in other words, the reason they have those traits which a good many of them do have, and which we condemn them for, seems to me to be entirely the fault of the Christians. I mean, the so-called Christians; I don't believe Christ would want any part of them!)

I cannot think of the people in my community as "foreigners." In Utica, the town in which I was brought up, there was

a great Italian American population, a bit of a Polish American contingent, quite a few Welshmen, some Irish, a few Germans, about six hundred Negroes, and the rest of the general hodgepodge of a city of 100,000. As I said before, it was never dinned into me that I was any better or any worse than the rest of the gang, so I never gave the matter much thought. Utopian, wasn't it? What a rude awakening I ran into when I got to college and learned the amount of intolerance there is among most groups of human beings.

I've been brought up, more or less, on Dr. Curran's ideas of "rugged individualism"; if a man has ability, that ability deserves to be recognized regardless of where he or his parents came from. There are certain aspects of the "Little Flower's" career that I find a bit hilarious, but only because he's done some laughable things, not because his name is La Guardia. And I do not believe that New York State has ever had, for a good long time, at least, as competent a governor as Herbert Lehman, even though I've been brought up as a Republican. It will probably be a long time before they get another as able as he.

If we Anglo-Saxons are so hepped on having "our kind of America," it might not hurt us at all to examine the fine messes we have made in our America, from the time we burned a few witches right up to the present when we're so disgustingly busy burning, not a few, but millions—only now we don't call them witches: we call them Communists, "Niggers," "Kikes," "Polacks," *ad infinitum*, *ad nauseam*.

I have been a Floor Manager in two department stores, have worked in the employment office of one, and am now in charge of a laboratory which has as a member of its staff a youngster who is one of the unfortunate "Bravas." My opinion of the new immigrants whom I have seen is that most of them are more than willing

SINCERELY YOURS

to work their hearts out for you, particularly if you give them the least bit of common, ordinary courtesy and human decency. (I sound more and more like Rousseau with every word, don't I? Well, I won't go so far as to say that Man is Good and let it go at that. I guess I have just found that most people have tendencies for good and would rather be that way than bad, if they have a chance to choose.) The boy who is working with me is really good—Rousseau should have known him! Despite the fact that he has had to quit school to go to work at sixteen, that his family includes one cousin now in jail for robbery, one sister separated from her husband, another on the verge—despite all the bad conditions that surround the district in which he lives now and the conditions under which he existed down on the Cape, that boy has more down-right, old-fashioned, “Anglo-Saxon” character than the old Puritans could have hoped for. The two Portuguese mulattoes who went before him in the lab would bring forth no such eulogies on my part. It is, as I say, a case of individuals, not groups or races.

I am no little tin god. I can be just as intolerant as the rest of them, and no doubt I often am. But at least I try to understand why people are as they are, and I honestly believe that, although a man may not agree with me, he is not neces-

sarily wrong on that account. If I am less prejudiced than the general run, if I get along well with most of the people I come in contact with, regardless of their name or color, it is because my parents are both exceptionally intelligent and understanding people and have managed to infuse into me a few of their own genuinely Christian ideas and ideals.

Also, I am that way in great measure from the reading I have done. I feel most intensely that *Two-Way Passage* and *From Many Lands* should be required reading in every high school and college in this country. Nowhere have I found such an unbiased, understanding, and understandable approach to the whole problem of American interrelationships as in these volumes. I have learned more from those two books about the people who live in this country and why they react as they do to one another and to their environment than in all the courses and other books that I have puzzled through so far. If I can profit so greatly, it is only logical to assume that others might profit likewise.

This country's greatest need is a friendly understanding.

This is one of many letters to Louis Adamic in connection with his “Nation of Nations” project. More will be published from time to time in this department.

• Schools and Teachers •

IT CAN BE DONE

WILLIAM SUCHY

MORE than three years ago, a group of teachers met with the superintendent of the J. Sterling Morton High School, Cicero, Illinois, to hear a "kick" about their work, written by one of their number. The criticism prompted a stir among the faculty and considerable misgivings on my part because I had written the analysis, bluntly entitled, "What's Wrong with Teaching at Morton?" and I was a new teacher with barely a year of experience in the system I was attacking.

In one respect I was not "new," however; I had grown up in this district whose diverse population of 130,000 makes it one of the important new-immigrant areas in the United States. I had attended Morton and my education had been influenced by the students of Czech, Polish, Lithuanian, Irish, German, Dutch, and Scandinavian descent who predominated there. Those who retained their cultural ties with the home were considered backward or "foreign"; those who came from old-stock American homes or who had "broken" with their new-immigrant derivation were thought to have arrived. When I came back to Morton as a teacher, I saw from experience that our education was not reaching where it was needed most. Three decades had brought no improvement. I decided to speak.

My critical statement, presented by the superintendent, produced sharp divisions of opinion. Some teachers thought the criticism exaggerated, but that something should be done about it; others found it an understatement of the real situation but were hopeless about improving it.

The point that struck home most concerned the conflicts in the family which arose when youngsters transferred allegiance to the high school and became impatient with their parents' occupations, social life, language, and culture which did not gain them any recognition in the classroom or in extra-curricular activity as in the case of "American" kids. Many of the old-stock American teachers remembered office reports on home background in disciplinary cases. Often they had wondered why such information was not used as a preventive, before it was too late. The meeting and discussion ended with the appointment of a committee to make the fullest use possible of the facilities of the school toward a better understanding of the new-immigrant community which it served.

An immediate opportunity offered itself in the social science department, which was reorganizing the freshman orientation course. (The details of this project in its inception appeared in the first issue of *COMMON GROUND*, Autumn 1940, in my article "The High School in a New-Immigrant Community.") An experimental unit, "Immigrants, the Background of Our Community," was introduced and did much to keep the project from lapsing. This quick application was possible because I had been doing research on immigrants, especially on the Czech and Polish Americans who had been overflowing into the district from Chicago since 1900.

The library staff welcomed a change to socialized reading and responded with

displays on immigration for both the students and faculty. *From Many Lands*, *Two-Way Passage*, and *What's Your Name?* by Louis Adamic are applicable to our school from cover to cover. Many teachers have found their human interest and authenticity a personal reward as well as a valuable aid to teaching.

The fact that I had intentionally jolted some people in making my criticism created misconceptions and temporarily heightened prejudices. A number felt offended by the implication that their long conscientious teaching or administration might have sometimes missed its mark. To some, the early work of our committee appeared "nationalistic." Several feared a step backward or an invitation to make the school a "hunky hang-out." Some misunderstandings resulted from the feeling that the committee was trying to assume authority and run the school. This friction ceased when regular departments began picking up the activities that suited their purpose. Then the project stopped being an innovation and became merely a new emphasis, one that appealed to live-wire teachers who like good discussions.

Assembly programs sponsored by student service organizations provided a natural outlet for the project and reached the students directly. A Yugoslav *tamburitsa* ensemble went over big for a starter. A noted soprano gave a recital of "Songs of the Nations." All the major nationality backgrounds in the school and community were represented by means of songs most people know as American favorites. A group of Indian dancers and a Negro quartet followed.

The variety of ways in which the project was adapted is too great to list, but several illustrations will serve. In the annual physical education pageants, for example, Irish, Dutch, Mexican, Czech, and American dances were headlined.

Boys and girls of Polish descent did Mexican dances. Czech mothers craned their necks to see their daughters jigging with the colleens. And a little Italian grandmother moved to the front to see a familiar figure step and turn among the smiling Gretels. A patriotic grand finale combined all the dancers around an American flag review. To the thousands of parents who attended, the conclusion had a special meaning.

Last spring the language clubs presented an open-house program which included Spanish, French, Polish, and Czech dances and songs. As a climax, the choral groups staged the dramatic *Ballad for Americans* in which a young Morton graduate of Czech descent sang the part made famous by Paul Robeson. The evening ended with an ovation that impressed the superintendent with the significance of the project in the community.

The music department has been ahead of the rest of the school in getting in touch with new-immigrant parents, who have consistently supported student concerts. In December, 1941, an all-Dvořák memorial concert was scheduled. More than 2,000 people attended, mostly of Czech derivation, but also Greek, Italian, and Dutch immigrants, and old-stock Americans, the parents and friends of the orchestra members. These older people work together without distinction or prejudice because they and their youngsters love music.

Much was crowded into that Sunday afternoon as 100 students prepared on the stage to give their symphonic program. English teachers had prepared class exhibits in the main library and acted as hosts. Art instructors guided parents through a gallery of student work, which included a large ink portrait of Antonín Dvořák. Orchestra mothers sold *koláčky* and other pastry to raise funds. A Czech immigrant conductor and a second-gen-

eration opera star, both from the community, appeared as guest artists. The performance was excellent as the young people, inspired, rose above the busy musicianship of the pupil, and the audience understood and appreciated. It was a blend of cultural resources, one might say, in a symphony—*From the New World*.

The Sunday afternoon I have described fell on the day of Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941. The following day the students assembled in the school auditorium to hear the radio broadcast of the President's war message to Congress. Then the superintendent contrasted the shocking events of the preceding day with the impressive celebration which had engaged

the best efforts and attention of the school and community a few hours past. He pledged us to a defense of the ideals which the concert represented against the barbarism and destruction of war. Thus our project had a date with history.

The war has not altered our course. If anything it has underlined the necessity of what we are doing. In the discouraging months of Singapore and Bataan, our teachers had a head start on an all-out program of Americanization. They were closer to the community, its problems, and its reactions to the war. And they have the satisfaction of knowing that some time and effort were devoted to building in peacetime the morale that the teacher must safeguard in war.

A HIGH SCHOOL GIRL WRITES LOUIS ADAMIC

WHERE does a high school pupil fit into the scheme of things today? Reams of material have been written for adults but not a whole lot to stimulate adolescent interest in America's problems.

At school we have heard several supposedly far-seeing, intelligent men speak on postwar problems. All of them said we were "the hope of America." It would be up to us to work out the salvation of the world. But not one gave us any guidance to a solution of the questions which were presented to us. We were left floating in space with not a speck of *terra firma* to put beneath our feet.

I'd still be hopelessly bewildered if an argument at home hadn't led me to your *Two-Way Passage*. I encouraged some of my friends at school to read the book, and all of them are interested and want to know more, but they feel there is no way for them to fit in. And I feel there must be! Whether your solution is right or wrong remains to be proved, but I for one feel it

is the best to be offered and want to learn more about it. In a magazine article of yours called "After Victory—What?" you stated classes had been formed affiliated with the plan. How could high school pupils join them? Is there any use for old-stock American children? How can you find out whether you would be suited for that work? Surely we can fit in somehow!

Is there any way high school children can join these various organizations mentioned in connection with the Plymouth Rock and Ellis Island project? Can school organizations like Student Citizenship Councils help adjustments in immigrant children either newly arrived or second-generation? I think perhaps a reconstruction program will be necessary inside of America among those classed as "enemy aliens" and placed in camps, many of whom are absolutely loyal to America and everything American.

I have looked everywhere I know to find satisfactory answers to my questions!

• The Immigrant and Negro Press •

OPEN LETTER TO THE READER'S DIGEST

Dear Sir:

I am deeply distressed and disturbed over Warren Brown's article on the Negro press ["A Negro Warns the Negro Press," Reader's Digest, January, 1943] which you published simultaneously with the Saturday Review of Literature. I think it presents a pretty sensational picture of something worth closer and more understanding appraisal.

You could, I think, with equal justice, have published an indictment of the white press by seizing on the sensational part of it like the News or the Hearst papers generally, isolating scare headlines or scandal-sheet slanting, and, by implication, have tarred the press of the whole country. It would not have been as serious as this indictment against the Negro press, however, for here an element of balance would enter in. Most people do know other white papers and so have some basis of comparison and judgment. With the Negro press, the situation is different. The average white man knows nothing of it and is likely to take whatever he reads about it as gospel. This may be what the Reader's Digest—and the SRL—did with Mr. Brown's piece.

When Mr. Brown says the press is Negro first and American second, he is right, of course, in the narrow sense that any specialized publication plugs its own field first. The various butcher's magazines, the Wall Street Journal, trade papers, etc., could all be scored upon the same grounds. What worries me, however, is the reactions of the man on the street who will not bother to make this parallel, who will read "Negro first" as tantamount to disloyalty. He will not stop to think

that he himself never allows a Negro to be anything but "Negro first." Even the SRL, dedicated to the whole of American literature, gave no space to Negro literature in its issue on the Deep South, to Richard Wright or Zora Neale Hurston, for instance. Where is the Negro to get his public attention and acclaim except in a specialized press—at least the ordinary Negro, who, like most people, does not become a national figure? The very existence of the Negro press testifies to the Negro's lack of acceptance as "American." In my small New Jersey town, no item appears in the local weekly about any Negro that does not include the tag line "colored"; even an item about a girl home from college for vacation carried it. Usually space is given only to the lurid aspects of Negro life, which do exist of course, as in American life generally. In few instances have I seen any social activity of a Negro hit the white papers. What about the very American love of seeing one's name in print? Negroes have bridge parties, Negroes have social affairs, Negro boys come home on furlough and are entertained. Where do such affairs get a break in the white press?

The country is, of course, full of specialized presses. I am reminded of the Jamestown, New York, papers of the '80s and early '90s, in which I once did extensive research on the Swedes who were at that time flocking into the town and who by the late '90s had grown important enough to take over the city government. But in the English-language press of the day, almost the only items about the Swedes I could find were the disreputable ones: John Johnson, Swede (yes, the tag

COMMON GROUND

line), was arrested for drunkenness, etc. I found nothing that would really indicate their interests or their development in the new environment. The growth of a Swedish-language press was inevitable to supply the lack. The parallel here is not exact, I am aware; the language situation enters in—something not true of the Negro press. Yet, just as the Swedish press is now rapidly dying out, indicating the final chapter in the assimilation of one immigrant group into the American whole, so the Negro press will die out naturally when the needs and exigencies that brought it into being have been met. The American white community will not wipe it out by repressing it; it will bring about its end only by an understanding of the purposes the Negro press now serves and giving expression to them in its own community papers, by making common cause.

The Negro fights for democracy in his papers—for democracy here in America, now. He is even militant about it and he sometimes does not mince words. This worries Mr. Brown and also many former white liberals. But fighting for one's rights is soundly in the American tradition. Reverse the situation and would the whites be any less "militant"?

How can we, under any claim to fair dealing and reasonableness, ask the Negro for all-out support in a war for the Four Freedoms and at the same time ask him to hush-hush his efforts for freedom for himself? Freedom for the world and freedom for the Negro at home in America are not mutually exclusive concepts; instead, they reinforce each other, they give good conscience to our world crusade. Americans of other stocks have had a head start in freedom; for the most part they came here because of choice, leaving behind them the fetters of Old-World government and economy that had oppressed them. But the Negro came because he had to, into a

denial of liberty. And now there are no more open frontiers left in the world for him to migrate to; he must build his freedom where he is. Americans of other stocks and races who pay more than lip service to the ideals of liberty they profess, should help, not hinder him.

But I know it is easier to fight for democracy in India tomorrow, easier to get intoxicated with phrases about freedom and the century of the common man just around the corner, than to realize quite bluntly there are some 13,000,000 common men right here at home today whose freedom leaves much to be desired. It is the old business of youngsters joining activity clubs and talking about Service while the family dishes remain undone and the lawn goes unmowed. Sometime we have to grow up.

America can never be more than the sum total of the good and the bad of its people, of its groups and individuals, privileged or disfranchised. We hold our limitations within our own hands. When we deny full participation to one group within our ranks, we draw our boundaries narrow. What the Negro gains, he does not take away from the whites; his well-being simply adds to the total civilized cultural potential. The Reader's Digest knows this as well as I do. Hence I am distressed when it publishes a scare piece like Brown's which would cloud the issue. It is a blow not only to the Negro press but to the understanding and unity and—shall I say—humility that should enter into our dealings with one another in these taut times.

In the meantime, I would suggest that the Reader's Digest and its subscribers really get acquainted with the Negro press through a subscription for six months—say—to the Pittsburgh Courier.

Very sincerely yours,

M. MARGARET ANDERSON

• Miscellany •

THE FINEST STORY OF WORLD WAR II

(This story comes to us by way of the Pittsburgh Courier, which reprinted it from the College of the Pacific Weekly, Stockton, California. By permission, we reproduce it here, cut slightly.)

THE SCENE was a sleepy fall day in an even sleepier Kansas town of the early 1900s. The character was a young lad of about 19, scuffling and thinking his way down the dusty path. You could tell he was thinking deeply and that what was bothering him was not the usual trouble that besets the late adolescent.

He opened the gate leading to the street and started on his way to football practice. Minutes later he walked into the dressing room. His team mates somehow knew there was a storm brewing under the exterior calm of their captain. They were quiet. There wasn't the usual horseplay and joshing. And, strangest of all, the captain left the field before practice was over.

He walked slowly into the dressing room, tears in his eyes. The day he had been elected to head the team had been his happiest, this his saddest.

For he was unlike most of the boys in town, whose parents and grandparents had lived there before them. His mother and father had left Germany before he was born, that their son might live in a land of tolerance and democracy. They had come to this small village because it seemed to them the ideal place to raise a child in the American way. And they had raised him that way. Granted that he'd gone swimming sometimes when he should have been painting the fence; fishing when he was supposed to be in school—just like every other boy in the village. But his

parents had taught their real lesson well. And today there were tears in his eyes.

For the boys had refused to play a nearby high school team because there was a Negro boy on that squad. When the door opened and the other fellows filed slowly in, he spoke simply, but his voice broke. "I'm ashamed of you, every last one of you! How can you make those things my parents and your grandparents fought for mere words? How can you live life half-free and half-slave—your mind free to parrot the words of Lincoln, and your actions slave to the prejudices of the mob? How dare you?" And he left the room.

There was a moment of stunned silence. No one had ever talked to them like that before. Finally one of them spoke. "I think we'd better call him back and play the game his way."

They did play the game his way, and he did come back. The young captain broke his leg later that year and never played again. But though these many years have passed, that boy's spirit is still worshipped in the sleepy Kansas town.

For he is Dwight Eisenhower, leader of the American and Allied troops on the African front. And serving under him as captain in the colored troops, assisting in the invasion, is that same Negro boy who played against him so many years ago.

The story is remarkable because of the coincidence. But it is more remarkable in that it shows in the simplest fashion the stuff of which real heroes are made. It was the spirit that young Dwight Eisenhower learned from his home that carried him to today's headlines. It shows that while the

war may not be won on the playing fields of Eton, it is won already in the thatched hut near the Volga, in the tenements of

Shanghai, in the vicar's cottage of an English countryside, and in the sleepy little Kansas dusty-pathed home.

POSTWAR RECONSTRUCTION

LOUIS ADAMIC's monthly bulletin "In Re: Two-Way Passage" (Milford, New Jersey) lists names and addresses of some of the college and university people who are conducting classes or seminars for the training of postwar relief and rehabilitation workers. With his permission we reprint them here:

Dr. Ray Lyman Wilbur, chancellor, Stanford University, Stanford University, California.

Prof. A. Whitney Griswold, chairman of the Foreign Areas Studies, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut. Leaflet available.

Dr. Nillard E. Gladfelter, vice-president, Temple University, Philadelphia.

Prof. Carl J. Friedrich, Graduate School of Public Administration, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts. Planning to train executives, administrators.

Faculty Committee on Postwar International Problems, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin.

Prof. Harold S. Quigley, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Prof. Gustav G. Carlson, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Prof. Alfred McClung Lee, chairman, Committee on Postwar Planning, Wayne University, Detroit, Michigan.

Miss Jean Anderson, assistant to the dean, Finch Junior College, 52 East 78th Street, New York City. Training for Greece.

Prof. Walter M. Kotschnig, Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts.

Prof. W. Harrison Carter, Jr., Connecticut University, Storrs, Connecticut.

Prof. Emil L. Jordan, New Jersey College for Women, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey.

Dr. H. B. Calderwood, 3032 Rackham Building, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan. Well-developed plans about to be put into effect.

Mr. Edwin H. Scott, registrar, Georgia State College for Women, Milledgeville, Georgia.

Prof. Henry P. Jordan (editor of *Problems of Postwar Reconstruction*, published by the American Council on Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.), Graduate School, New York University, Washington Square, New York City. Important seminar work.

Dr. Reinhold Schairer, director of the United States Committee on Educational Reconstruction, 2 West 45th Street, New York City. He conducts a lively Seminar on Postwar Educational Reconstruction at the School of Education, New York University, Washington Square, New York City.

Dr. Robert G. Caldwell, Dean of Humanities, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Boston, Massachusetts. Prospectus available; training technical experts.

Prof. C. W. Kiewiet, director of the Institute for Foreign Service, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York. The Cornell faculty have developed a plan for the training of people in reconstruction work as it will pertain to agricultural production, rural housing, and community health. An outline of the plan is available.

Prof. Schuyler Wallace, director, Training in International Administration, Co-

MISCELLANY

lumbia University, New York City. Printed announcements available.

Dean Leonard W. Mayo, School of Applied Social Sciences, Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio.

Prof. John Reed Spicer, chairman, War Adaptations Committee, Alfred University, Alfred, New York.

Prof. Mary L. Coolidge, chairman, Faculty Committee on Postwar Problems, Wellesley College, Wellesley, Massachusetts.

Dr. Louis W. Norris, vice-president, Baldwin-Wallace College, Berea, Ohio; or Prof. Lowell C. Yoder, same college. Eager for students from new-immigrant groups who want to prepare themselves for postwar work in Europe.

Prof. Margaret deSchweinitz, Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, New York. Training social workers for Greece.

Prof. J. W. Cohen, chairman, Courses in the World Crisis, University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado.

YARDSTICK

COUNTRIES, like individuals, sometimes come upon unexpected yardsticks by which to measure themselves and their potentialities. The deaths of three great Americans in the space of a few weeks—Dr. Franz Boas, Dr. George Washington Carver, and Nikola Tesla—throw into high focus what the American idea at its best can be.

German-born, of Jewish parentage, Dr. Boas at his death was professor emeritus of anthropology at Columbia University. More than any other man, he exploded the fallacy and myth of race superiority. "Nordic nonsense," he called it. "None of the civilizations was the product of the genius of a single person," he wrote. "Ideas and inventions were carried from one to the other; and, although intercommunication was slow, each people which participated in the ancient development contributed its share to the general progress. As all have worked together in the development of the ancient civilizations, we must bow to the genius of all, whatever group of mankind they may represent. . . ." Among his students, to whom he was Papa Boas, are Ruth Benedict, Zora Neale Hurston, Paul Radin, Clark Wissler, and Margaret Mead.

Born a slave in America, and traded for a horse, Dr. Carver at his death was an internationally-known scientist and Fellow of the Royal Society of Great Britain. More than any other person, black or white, he showed the way to rehabilitate southern agriculture. From the peanut he made over 300 products and started an industry which was to yield an annual turn over of more than \$60,000,000. His rise from slavery and illiteracy reads like an Alger legend—till the moment of success. Then the simple, gentle, self-effacing and profoundly religious nature of the man shines out. He refused continually all personal reward for his discoveries, giving them freely to the world. In his laboratory at Tuskegee Institute, he felt himself an instrument in the hands of Providence, working with divine materials for the benefit of all mankind.

Nikola Tesla, too, the Yugoslav American, might have died rich. But, like Dr. Carver, he was driven not by desire for fame and monetary reward but only by the inner springs of his own being. He functioned in his own pattern of genius, releasing his electrical discoveries freely to the world. Death came obscurely in a small hotel room. "Were we to eliminate

COMMON GROUND

from our industrial world the results of Tesla's work," writes Dr. A. B. Behrend, "the wheels of industry would cease to turn, our electric trains and cars would stop, our towns would be dark, our mills and factories dead and idle. So far-reaching is his work that it has become the warp and woof of industry. Should Tesla's

work be suddenly withdrawn, darkness would prevail and we would slump into barbarism."

But the work of these men will not be withdrawn, and America is immeasurably the richer because of them. Jew, Negro, "Hunky"—they were great Americans, by the alchemy of the American idea.

A COMMENTARY ON THE PATRIOTIC TIES aliens have to this country at the time they take the oath of naturalization comes in a report from Judge Dan Pyle of the St. Joseph Circuit Court in South Bend, Indiana. On November 18 and 19, 1942, his court admitted to American citizenship 190 persons representing 14 nationalities: Belgium 18, Czechoslovakia 6, Germany 16, Great Britain 17, Hungary 53, Italy 19, Lithuania 1, The Netherlands 4, Poland 24, Rumania 2, Russia 5, Sweden 7, Switzerland 1, and Yugoslavia 17.

Relatives of this group of 190 new citizens already in the United States military service totaled 203: the husband of a petitioner, 67 sons, 2 daughters, 1 grandson, 8 brothers, 42 cousins, 65 nephews, 1 stepson, 4 sons-in-law, 9 brothers-in-law, and three petitioners themselves. In addition, there were 41 sons of draft age not yet in service, and 16 of the petitioners liable to the draft—making a total of 260 relatives of these 190 new Americans who are or will be in the armed services.

THE LOYAL AMERICANS OF GERMAN DESCENT, in a moving Christmas message to all men and women of German ancestry, called upon the German people to overthrow Hitler, who "is creating a deep loathing of all things German in the heart of mankind." "We call on the German people to return to the virtues of their

forefathers and the honor of their greatest leaders," the declaration read. "We summon them to heed and fear the rising gorge and contempt of peoples, and by risks and dangers taken now, in sundering themselves from the criminals, to secure for their children and children's children their ancient honorable position in the family of mankind. . . . We Americans of German descent utterly repudiate every thought and deed of Hitler and his Nazis."

WHITE STUDENTS FROM ANTIOCH COLLEGE and Negro students from near-by Wilberforce joined hands recently to abolish Jim Crow in a Yellow Springs, Ohio, theater. When, by prearrangement, some Wilberforce students went down front for seats instead of sitting in the Jim Crow section in the rear, the manager asked them to move. They did, without a word—not to the Jim Crow section but to other seats all over the place, next to a white fellow-conspirator whenever possible. The idea was to keep moving. The manager, who couldn't be everywhere at once, and who found that most of the rest of the patrons were entirely neutral, finally gave up, and a Jim Crow rule that had no actual validity in popular demand went into oblivion.

WHERE BUT IN AMERICA? At the Church of All Nations, 9 Second Avenue, New York City, on the evening of December

MISCELLANY

30, a Japanese American basketball team defeated a Chinese American quintet, 24-20. The referee was Italian American. To show there were no hard feelings, a return match was scheduled by the captains, Dan Wong and Toge Fujihira. After the game, the basketball court became a dance floor and the 200 Japanese and Chinese Americans jitterbugged together.

THE REV. JESSE WAYMAN ROUETTE was recently elected president of the Lutheran Pastors Association in the Borough of Queens. The only Negro Lutheran minister in the county, he now becomes leader and spokesman for more than 400 clergymen, all white. Rev. Rouette speaks six languages and is the only Negro ever graduated from Augustana College, a Swedish American institution in Rock Island, Illinois. Of his own church communicants, half are white and half colored, and the Long Island Daily Press calls the church "probably the Borough's best illustration of democracy."

THE WAR DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCED ON January 28th that loyal American citizens of Japanese descent will compose a special unit in the United States Army. This will add to the nearly five thousand Nisei who had joined the armed forces before evacuation, and comes as a result "of many earnest requests by loyal American citizens of Japanese extraction," says the Department, for such a unit. Recruited through voluntary induction, the combat team will have infantry, artillery, engineer, and medical components, and will be trained for combat service in an active theater of the war. "Loyalty to country is a voice that must be heard," said Secretary Stimson, "and I am glad that I am now able to give active proof that this basic American belief is not a casualty of war."

Approving Secretary Stimson's proposal, President Roosevelt wrote on February 1: "This is a natural and logical step toward the reinstitution of the Selective Service procedures which were temporarily disrupted by the evacuation from the West Coast.

"No loyal citizen of the United States should be denied the democratic right to exercise the responsibilities of his citizenship, regardless of his ancestry. The principle on which this country was founded and by which it has always been governed is that Americanism is a matter of the mind and heart; Americanism is not, and never was, a matter of race or ancestry. . . . Every loyal American citizen should be given the opportunity to serve this country wherever his skills will make the greatest contribution—whether it be in the ranks of our armed forces, war production, agriculture, government service, or other work essential to the war effort."

THE FEDERAL COUNCIL of the Churches of Christ in America, together with the War Relocation Authority, has been doing a quietly effective piece of work through its Committee on Resettlement of Japanese Americans, in mobilizing jobs and favorable public sentiment for the dispersal relocation of Nisei evacuees throughout the country. Individuals, or committees set up in various cities, have been asked to find standard-wage jobs which might employ Nisei labor to relieve the man-power shortage, test public reaction to their coming, find adequate housing, and take Nisei under their wing in activities and fellowship once they come. Evacuees are released for such work only after complete investigation by the WRA and the FBI. So successful has the exploratory work been in tapping this cross section of skilled workers and professional people that the WRA has now set up field offices in Midwest cities to work

COMMON GROUND

with the United States Employment Service offices there. Evacuees are now being released from relocation centers to enter industry, business, domestic work, and agriculture at the rate of 75 a day. It is hoped to have 10,000 out by the end of 1943.

COMMON GROUND readers who know of jobs and want to help in this work are urged to write George E. Rundquist, executive secretary of the Committee on Resettlement, at 297 Fourth Avenue, New York City.

THE OFFICE OF WAR INFORMATION has distributed 2,000,000 copies of *Negroes and the War*, a tabloid pamphlet with a foreword by Chandler Owen. In graphic pictures and text it celebrates the achievements of Negro Americans in many fields and recognizes their important contributions, in all fields, to the fighting of the war. The distribution has been mainly to Negroes, but every library, every church, every forum group in America—and certainly every reader of CG—ought to have a copy as specific ammunition to use in battering down race prejudice. Free copies may be had upon request to the Division of Public Inquiries, Office of War Information, Washington, D.C.

RACIAL IDENTIFICATION in crime stories tends to produce race prejudice, Albert Deutsch pointed out in PM for January 20th. He quoted a constructive memo on this matter from John P. Lewis, managing editor of the paper, to his staff: "Use of racial identification in crime stories sometimes is discriminatory in that it associates a race with the acts of an individual. Racial identification often is legitimate or even necessary, but it is not necessary every time a member of a minority race commits a crime."

In this connection lies specific work for CG readers who frequently write the

Common Council asking what they as individuals can do to bring about better race relations. One immediate job is to keep an eye on their local papers and work for the eradication of the racial tag line wherever they find it. They will discover it not only in crime news, but even in the obituaries and accident cases: "John Doe, colored, died this morning, etc." "Mary Smith, colored, was struck by a hit-and-run driver, etc." This kind of humiliation of American citizens is largely unconscious habit, but it is high time it was stopped. Editors should at the same time be encouraged to run positive news items about the groups commonly discriminated against.

WORLD PEACEWAYS, INC., 103 Park Avenue, New York City, has reprinted Louis Adamic's article "After Victory—What?" which appeared originally in *This Week Magazine* for November 8. It is a concise restatement of his *Two-Way Passage* proposal, made more specific with organizational suggestions. For copies write directly to World Peaceways. 10 cents each.

THE AMERICAN COMMON—newest venture of the Common Council—has undertaken an ambitious program of activities at 40 East 40th Street, New York City: discussions of the postwar world, interpretation and analysis of the American scene, "nationality" nights, and literary and women's teas. Upon request, CG readers outside the metropolitan area may receive the regular *Calendar of Events*. The variety of programs listed hold many suggestions for activities elsewhere.

A PAMPHLET CONTAINING the speeches delivered at the Nobel Anniversary Dinner by Pearl Buck and other Award winners has been compiled by the Common Council. Free to members, it is available to others at 10 cents a copy.

• The Bookshelf •

CONDUCTED BY HENRY C. TRACY

SELF-DISCOVERY IN AMERICA

AMERICA: THE STORY OF A FREE PEOPLE. By Allen Nevins and Henry Steele Commager. Boston: Little, Brown. 507 pp. \$3.

Essentially a popular history in the modern manner—with stress on mind-states rather than on outer events—this incisive study succeeds by deft analysis in showing how our people became progressively conscious of the meaning in terms of social betterment of the freedom they fought for, and the limitations of that freedom when gained. Still unsolved problems, the authors point out, arising from our very successes and our unrestrained liberties, demand rigid self-examination that we may understand not only our national history as a background, but that same story as a continuous process in which we as individuals must play a conscious part. The authors have an uncommon gift for exposing the exact point at issue in tangles where political or other interests have obscured such points and led the people astray.

Charles and Mary Beard in *The American Spirit* (Macmillan. \$5) show that the idea of civilization has been a prevailing one from the date of our birth as a nation, and that our devotion to that idea—now held as something to live and die for—best expresses the American spirit. They cite thinkers and statesmen to show how the idea has been interpreted, often far in advance of the mood of the time. Thus we find a startling anticipation of the spirit of the New Deal in addresses to Congress by John Quincy Adams in 1824. And we

have not yet as a people advanced to the view of the Negro's place in civilization elaborated by Lydia M. Child in 1833. Many of us still confuse individuality—which means personal worth and is essential to the idea of civilization—with individualism, which may mean and often has meant complete disregard for personal worth save in the aggressive and selfish exploitation of other men. Such anti-social types of individualism are here exposed. This volume is the fourth of a series, *The Rise of American Civilization*.

Alfred Kazin draws on the literature of our modern period for *On Native Grounds* (Reynal & Hitchcock. \$3.75). Here is Howells, “rootless in spirit at the height of his career,” estranged from his friends by his change of views since the Haymarket hanging (which he denounced as “civic murder”), and aiding in the promotion of a new realism in literature that would—in the fifty years following—make it a true expression of the American conscience in protest and challenge. After him come the prairie realists, spokesmen for the populist movement, downed for the time being, but resurgent in this decade. Mr. Kazin's account of documentary and photographic reporting is brilliant; that of the discovery of the real America as of almost a lost continent in the regional studies—unexpected product of the WPA writer's project—is even inspiring.

Margaret Mead, social anthropologist, author of *And Keep Your Powder Dry* (Morrow. \$2.50), appraises American characteristics as results of American experience rather than education. Chief

among them is our insistence that there shall be some satisfying relation between what we do and what we get. With the incentive of belief in success, we make any effort, balk at no difficulty, undertake any job, however new or unfamiliar; our gift for analyzing a problem or situation carries us through. Our willingness to take personal responsibility, Miss Mead rates as another grand trait. Great inventors that we are, she argues, what we need now is to invent some form of social organization so convincing it will supersede the obsolete fashion of settlement of differences by war.

The Making of America, sponsored by the Pennsylvania State Department of Public Instruction (Smith & Durrell.

\$2.75), is especially dedicated to new Americans who "were not fortunate enough to have gone through our schools." Written from a liberal point of view, it is our history simplified, condensed, and made intelligible in its human significance. The ten epochs into which the story is divided mark the periods of discovery, settlement, disentanglement (from Old-World connections), expansion, internal adjustments, social and judicial advances, world relations and every phase of national crisis including the great depression, and recovery and new world alignments of today. The text is embellished by illustrations on each page-margin that enliven the reading.

IN THE AMERICAN PATTERN

Self-discovery and self-analysis, a probing into backgrounds and values, are common elements in a group of recent volumes by young Americans. Michael De Capite, with *Maria* (John Day. \$2.50), and Jerre Mangione, with *Mount Allegro* (Houghton Mifflin. \$2.50), join the growing ranks of articulate young Italian Americans with books to their credit—among them John Fante, Pietro Di Donato, John Ciardi, Guido D'Agostino, and Jo Pagano.

Mr. De Capite's volume portrays the life of a sensitive second-generation girl married early to a domineering husband who takes from the American environment only a belief in success, with money-getting as his supreme goal. Maria, who never loves him, also never understands him or the "American" way he pursues. Since their whole life in America is based upon the shallowest of surface living, it collapses with the depression, and Maria is left alone at the end of the story, grappling to build a sounder foundation under

the lives of her three children, some of whom already show the results of rootlessness in tensions and frustrations. This is an important and sobering book, with occasional lighter moments of sunlit memory, of living in the past. Readers of COMMON GROUND will remember Michael De Capite's work in this magazine.

But true as this picture is for vast segments of immigrant life, the sunnier portrayal in Jerre Mangione's *Mount Allegro* has equal validity for others, and it has a charm in the telling which makes it a joy to read. It is Mr. Mangione's own story of growing up among the Sicilian immigrants in Rochester. Being a second-generation American hasn't really bothered Jerre Mangione a bit; his book is living testimony to this fact. He is U.S. American, but he is also *Mount Allegro*—which makes him American-plus; he knows and appreciates both cultures. True, the conflict in environments embarrassed him as a child; his father said he was "half-and-

THE BOOKSHELF

half"—and like any child he longed to be whole. But he came in time to admire his parents and uncles and aunts, who were Sicilian born, for the very qualities he once disliked—"their warm and easy acceptance of life." The story is alive with the zest of large family gatherings where food and wine, gossip and folk-tales and music give play to a passion for social living; where the characters are supported by a strong social fabric, a rich culture, and respect for decency that has nothing to do with economic position.

In *For My People* (Yale. \$2), chosen as the 1942 volume in the Yale Series of Younger Poets, Margaret Walker, a young southerner, searches also in her background for integration into the American scene. Sometimes her words burn with the search for answers she cannot find, as in "Since 1619" or in "Delta"; at other times she is the amused bystander who takes people as they come and impales them neatly in a ballad. Sometimes she probes her own lineage:

*My grandmothers were strong.
They followed plows and bent to toil.
They moved through fields sowing seed.
They touched earth and grain grew.
They were full of sturdiness and singing.
My grandmothers were strong.*

*My grandmothers are full of memories
Smelling of soap and onions and wet clay
With veins rolling roughly over quick
hands;*

*They have many clean words to say.
My grandmothers were strong.
Why am I not as they?*

Always the reader feels her sincerity, her tough honesty, and her undeniable gift of words.

While Margaret Walker is only at the threshold of her career, Zora Neale Hurston pauses at a vantage point in hers to look back in *Dust Tracks on a Road* (Lippincott. \$3), along the path she has come. Brilliant anthropologist and collector of Negro folklore, Miss Hurston has never been anybody but herself, and her book radiates that self with such warmth and vitality and humor and charm that it is a tonic to read.

What America has meant to one person and what it could mean to all Americans and the world is movingly brought out in Salom Rizk's autobiography, *Syrian Yankee* (Doubleday, Doran. \$2.75). Those who read the brief version of his story as it appeared in the Reader's Digest or who have heard him speak will welcome the complete narrative in book form. It has the same eloquence that has moved audiences the country over. With a never-failing sense of wonder at the idea of America, Mr. Rizk tells the simple yet extraordinary tale of how he came here and became part of it, and his story becomes a shining parable of the "American dream" come true.

CONTINENTAL THINKING—FOR THE AMERICAS

Luis Quintanilla in *A Latin American Speaks* (Macmillan. \$2.50) is addressing two audiences: one north, one south of the Rio Grande. He wants them to think alike on main issues—continentally. There

is, he contends, but one America. The real ground for amity and collaboration among all of its twenty-one republics lies not primarily in their immediate common peril which tends to obliterate sectional differ-

COMMON GROUND

ences, but in their common political faith and destiny. We of the Western Hemisphere, he points out, are not only by conviction free men and (since 1933 at least) good neighbors, but partners in a common undertaking. The whole magnificent drive of this book is toward proving that this undertaking is the consolidation of an inter-American democratic system to implement the ideals already held by the republics and embodied in their constitutions. Clear, frank, and often caustic, the volume is a fine analysis of the culture and spirit of the Americans, north and south, and a clear account of their approach toward a common understanding.

Latin America: Its Place in World Life by Samuel Guy Inman (Harcourt, Brace. \$3.75) now appears in a new edition, nearly half of which is new material. Dr. Inman, from long and close relations with Latin Americans, writes of them as people rather than countries; as persons rather than governments; as poets rather than engineers or business men, who have much to contribute to a world life that should consist of more than mere material progress and standardized possessions, conveniences, and pleasures. Political and social movements, racial problems, new forces, spiritual currents, and continental relations are here fully considered.

ASPECTS OF THE AMERICAN SCENE

Will Irwin's *The Making of a Reporter* (Putnam. \$3.75), while it is a personal life-story, yields vivid flashes of personalities, behaviors, and attitudes that have given each of the five last decades its peculiar stamp. Irwin's own zest for life, his gift for winning men over, eminently fit him for reporting persons and scenes in such fashion that fifty years of American life, and the men and women who made it what it was, pass before our view. Not a gallery of portraits—nothing so cold. An exuberant book.

I Came Out of the Eighteenth Century by John A. Rice (Harper. \$3) is partly a life, partly a confession; it is, throughout, a searching critique of American life and education. We have had no more engaging account of a southern childhood. Full of terse and pointed sayings, apt turns of expression, it is a book to make the reader think and question.

In Mr. Justice Holmes (Scribners. \$2.50) Francis Biddle, the present Attorney General, writes: "We shall remember

Holmes for his courage, for his human understanding and simplicity, for his shafts of wit, for the integrated maturity of his life." He entered law determined not to be narrowed by the profession but to broaden the profession. Through experience and a bent toward self-discipline, Mr. Justice Holmes became a whole man and one of the great Americans.

We might think everything worth telling in the life of Thomas Jefferson had been told, but Bernard Mayo's *Jefferson Himself* (Houghton Mifflin. \$4) lets us into the real and personal life of this versatile man by building the record from his own letters, writings, and autobiography—a rich storehouse of inexhaustible interest and charm.

Angel Mo' and Her Son, Roland Hayes by MacKinley Helm (Little, Brown. \$2.75) is the story of how a Georgia farm boy learned from his father (part Cherokee Indian) how to make the body sing with the soul, and sang his way through every barrier till he captured Europe and

won worldwide recognition as an artist and as a man. Mother Fanny was his guardian angel all through.

Swede Homestead by Nancy Mae Anderson (Caxton Printers. \$2.50) gives a vivid picture of home-making by Swedish-born pioneers in the Coeur d'Alene country—a wilderness when Louis Anderson came, in the 1890s. The true story of a family group and their life on a homestead, told with great spirit.

America Is Americans by Hal Borland (Harper. \$1.75) is written for a country

at war—a telling in rough-hewn verse of the response of the people to their country's need, reminding them they are the country. The home thoughts of soldiers and sailors, as here voiced, are often of nature—the land itself that bred them.

Clare Leighton's *Southern Harvest* (Macmillan. \$3.50) gives us the life of the southern Negro at work, through superb wood engravings and a supporting lyrical prose that bring out Miss Leighton's excitement at the first impact of our southern scene.

ON WINNING THE PEACE

C. J. Hambro, former President of the League of Nations Assembly and of the Norwegian Parliament, writes on *How to Win the Peace* (Lippincott. \$3). Nothing yet in print has brought home with more force the fact that peace is the concern of every person and must be won by the people, not left to those "higher up." The stupidity of diplomats who made the last peace a breeding ground for a world-destroying doctrine was never made more plain. The form in which that doctrine was foisted on Hitlerized youth is here revealed in all its ghastliness. Yet that monstrous education for Nazism had one merit: it taught that sacrifices must be made by all. The democracies, meanwhile, favored comfortable life as an end in itself, fostered disbelief in the threat of war, failed to comprehend an opposite mentality and discipline arming for world conquest. The remedy for such attitudes is indicated in the first part of Mr. Hambro's volume; the statesman's problems in the second.

Similarly, Egon Ranshofen-Wertheimer in *Victory Is Not Enough* (Norton. \$3) urges that only by making sacrifices,

by undertaking obligations, may we hope to protect vanquished nations from tendencies which war has not cured, and from passions that it has intensified, not healed. He deals mainly with the psychology of the people and nations involved; he favors a European confederation for the future, but only after total military occupation of Axis lands and the stupendous experiment of educating an entire nation for resumption of responsibilities it has betrayed. He dissents from Adamic's view in *Two-Way Passage* that primarily those of new German American stock should undertake the re-education of German youth. Americans of older stock, he thinks, will be less suspect, and gives reasons that carry some force. Step-by-step restoration of normal self-government for Europe is the main theme of the book.

Dorothy Thompson in *Listen, Hans!* (Houghton Mifflin. \$2.50) reasons that the Nazi conception of a Third Reich is a blend of contradictions that will not work in Germany, still less as a New Order for Europe, and that we may convince the Germans of this by cold logic and pave the way for a postwar Reich will-

COMMON GROUND

ing to act in harmony with Western civilization. Part I gives a brilliant analysis of German history; Part II, a series of broadcasts sent over CBS to listeners in Germany, embodies the civilized approach she commends to us.

Henry Bamford Parkes in *The World After War* (Crowell. \$2.50) extends this idea of convincing by cold logic but applies it to the United Nations first. If they will cease their Utopian thinking and enforce conditions which alone can make possible the building of a world peace on stable foundations, not only Germany but the smaller nations now in fear of aggression will adjust themselves to it—to a peace made in terms of individual welfare for all, rather than for nations as such, with their rivalries and hates.

Listen, Germany contains radio messages to the German people sent over BBC by Thomas Mann (Knopf. \$1.50). Without compromising his own standards as to the worth and dignity of the human spirit, this great German speaks to his people in words of scorn and condemnation, arraigns their leader in merciless terms, and reproaches those who let themselves be misled. His is the vision of a major prophet, who, beyond today's disgrace, sees the beginning of a united world.

A Permanent United Nations by Amos J. Peaslee (Putnam. \$1.50) is particularly valuable for its concise statement of the points on which a successful solution of postwar problems by the United Nations must rest.

Michael Straight's *Make This the Last War* (Harcourt, Brace. \$3) discusses interestingly the future of the United Nations after the war. Not victors, merely, and vanquished, but all poverty-stricken and en-

slaved people are concerned in any peace that can endure. Arbitrary domination and exploitation of retarded people must cease, argues Mr. Straight; a real bond to unite the world is an economic procedure based on the well-being of all. A challenging book.

The report of Sir William Beveridge on *Social Insurance and Allied Services* (Macmillan. \$1) is tangible proof that abolition of want as a postwar aim is not only possible and planned, but, the report finds, could have been accomplished before the present war. The means for achieving it are fully outlined.

Norman Angell, writing *Let the People Know* (Viking. \$2.50), does an immense service to John Citizen by making it plain that no point in the complicated relationship of nations at war or after war is too difficult for him to grasp; that he must understand basic issues, for everything depends on that. In a people's war, the people must know where their interests, their responsibilities, lie. Every attempt will be made to confuse them. Bankers, business men, professors, will be victims of confusion quite as much as coal-heavers and garage hands. Phrasing his argument in everyday language, Sir Norman covers point by point the issues on which common folk of every free nation have through two decades gone astray, and then shows where true safety lies. We should like to see this wise and illuminating book placed in the hands of every defense worker in the United States and Canada, and also in the hands of teachers who hold that something more than sterile knowledge has its place in our schools—the ability to understand and act upon plain, everyday truths.

Publications of the

Common Council

COMMON GROUND—*back issues.*
Copies of the first ten issues of **COMMON GROUND**—Autumn 1940 through Winter 1943—are still available and may be had for the special price of three for \$1.00 or four for \$1.25. Bound volumes (four issues) are available at \$2.85 each.

Foreign Festival Customs. An especially useful handbook for groups planning Easter or other holiday programs. Lists Christmas, Easter, Thanksgiving, and Harvest customs in foreign countries as well as recipes for typical nationality dishes. Mimeographed. 54 pages. 50 cents.

How to Become a Citizen of the United States. A 95-page pamphlet giving detailed information on each step of the naturalization process, with 131 specimen questions and answers for applicants and the Constitution of the United States. Revised edition October 1942. Price: Single copies, 25 cents; in lots of 25 or more, 20 cents each; in lots of 100, 15 cents each.

Send for complete list

**COMMON COUNCIL FOR
AMERICAN UNITY**

222 Fourth Ave., New York City

"A first novel of
deep authenticity"

—LOUIS ADAMIC

MARIA

by

Michael De Capite

▶ "A second-generation Italian American tells about immigrants and American-born Italians. Charged with passion . . . a remarkably well written book."

—N. Y. Times Book Review.

▶ "The whole book has a certain imaginative grasp and a certain richness of texture which distinguish it from the ordinary."

—Robert Penn Warren,
Chicago Tribune.

At all bookstores \$2.50

THE JOHN DAY COMPANY

Sales Office: 2 W. 45th Street, New York

What Readers Say About COMMON GROUND

COMMON GROUND is one of the most stimulating and vital factors in my life and work. It gives me hope in human nature and sustains me in my efforts to work for better understanding among my fellow men.—A Detroit teacher

It has helped me to understand and appreciate more fully the skills and cultures of other peoples who have shared in making this country what it is and to love my own country better.—A Hollywood reader

I enjoy it more than anything else I read by way of periodicals.—A Boston psychologist

Inspires hope that what America is within herself the world may come to be.—A Chicago church worker

I know of no magazine that is more interesting to me. I use it constantly as a basis for work with girls and women in Y.W.C.A. groups in small towns and villages in Ohio. It has given me many suggestions for a bulletin I edit once a month.—An Ohio reader

Interesting because it is the essence of interest—real life.—A retired teacher, Michigan

Articulates for minority groups. Tells what they really are, think, and seek; also where the majority fails to fairly meet them. Gives a blue print for more enlightened action.—A Los Angeles librarian

Informative, amusing, enjoyable, liberating, emancipating, and democratizing.—A South Carolina labor leader

I have come to know better such foreign-born as come before me. . . . I can better understand their viewpoint.—A California judge

It shoots a lot of holes in prejudices.—A Boston home missionary

It shows me that idealism of the American type is not outmoded.—A Wisconsin priest